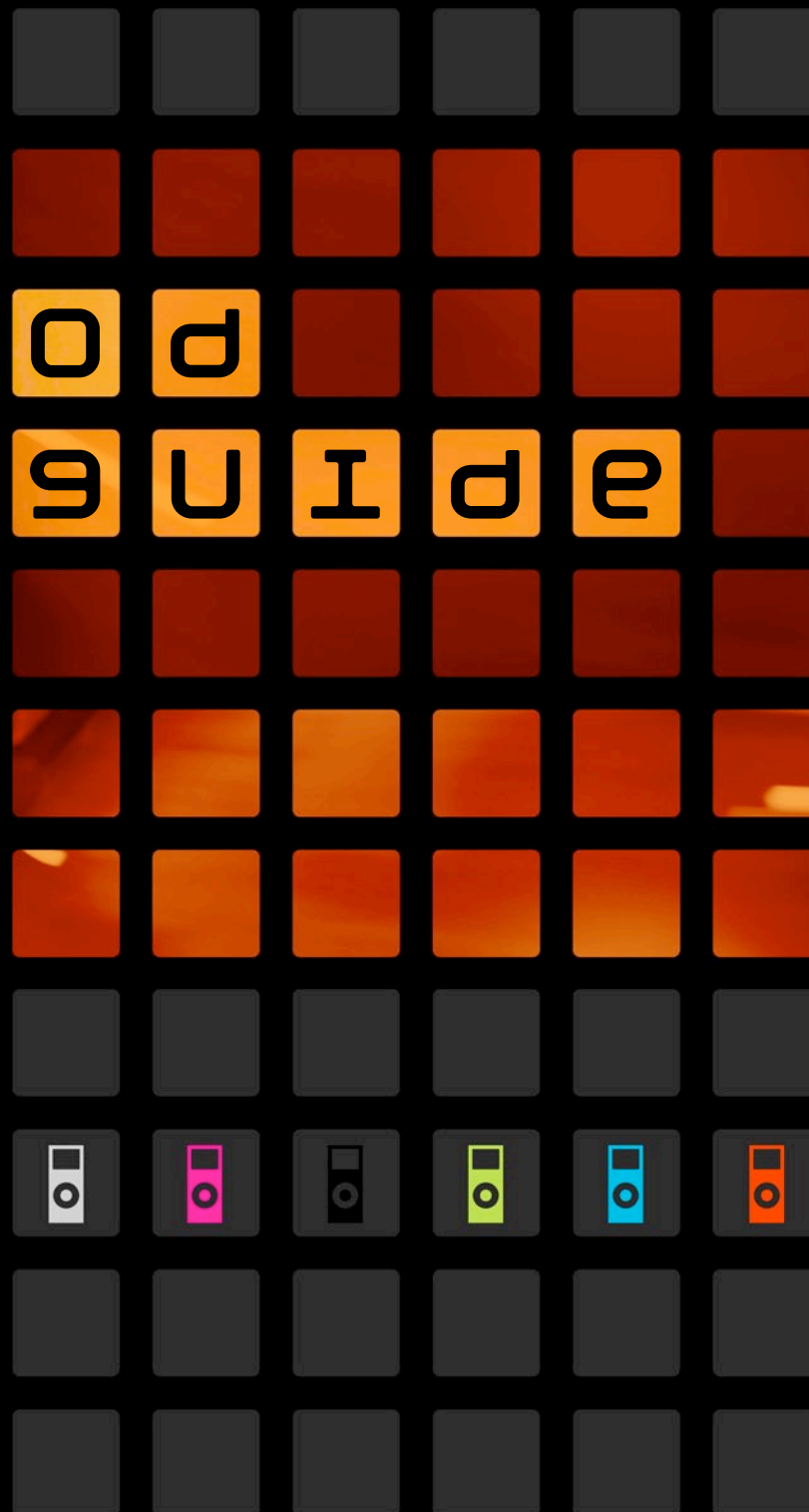




BY ILounge.COM, the DEFINITIVE GUIDE
TO IPODS, the YEAR'S BEST IPOD ACCESSORIES,
AND APPLE'S DIGITAL LIFESTYLE REVOLUTION

OVER 1,100 PRODUCTS RATED
OVER 20 EXCLUSIVE ACCESSORY DEBUTS
THE IPOD HOME AND MUCH MORE



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Retail Price : \$24.95

Ships November 2006

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Retail Price : \$24.95

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Removable Dock connector cover



Retractable headphone cord wrap

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2007 iPod Buyers' Guide

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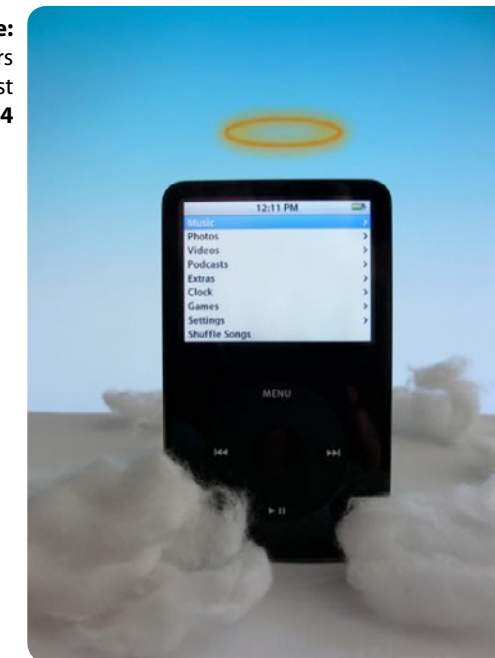
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What does the future hold for the iPod? Our guesses are here.

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The iPod Colors
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Editorial: 2,000 Add-Ons, Boiled Down. After much sifting, we bring you the iPod's best accessories.

Last year, new iPod and accessory releases worked together to keep Apple in the forefront of mainstream media. From the iPod shuffle's introduction in January to iPod mini updates in February, iPod 4G price drops in July, the iPod nano in September, and the 5G iPod in October, Apple occupied almost the entire calendar with iPod news, leaving just enough gaps for eye- and ear-popping third-party accessories to fill. Altec Lansing, Etymotic, Griffin Technology, iHome, and Vaja had banner years, changing the way we carried, listened to, and accessorized our iPods.

For better and for worse, this year has been substantially different. Though company representatives suggested that 2006 would continue the company's insanely rapid pace of innovation, Apple made barely any iPod announcements all year long: other than an ill-received event to introduce overpriced leather cases and the iPod Hi-Fi speaker system, the company didn't make a major new iPod announcement until September, when it released new iPod nanos, updated the 5G iPods, and announced newer, smaller iPod shuffles. The much-rumored iPod phone? Missing in action. A widescreen video iPod? Nowhere to be found - sorry, our editorial last year was too optimistic. Instead, the (PRODUCT) RED iPod nano became news.

So what have we occupied ourselves with? **Accessories.** Apple now presides over a growing arsenal of licensed speaker systems, video goggles, FM transmitters, and voice recorders - supposedly 3,000 at last count - and the number only continues to grow. We know this because we're still continuing to dig through the piles: **on one day alone during the construction of this year's Buyers' Guide, we received more than 20 new accessories for testing**, and we expect the stream to continue flowing over the next year. Of the claimed 3,000 accessories, we've tested more than 2,000 ourselves, and published full reviews of over 1,100 of them on iLounge.com.

That brings us to this year's iPod Buyers' Guide. In addition to helping new buyers find their "right" iPods, our goal this year was to focus on only the very best accessories in each of the forty real add-on categories now out there: oldies but goodies like iPod cases, plus newly-invigorated genres such as iPod games, portable video displays, clock radios, and toys. We know your time and money are precious, so we don't want to waste them with junk - it's our job to sort through all the bad and boring stuff to show you the really great and interesting new accessories that are out there. In the pages that follow, you'll find dozens of great gift ideas for yourself, your friends and family; we hope that you'll print them out and get all the iPod goodies you want in the months to come. As always, iLounge.com provides more details if you need them.



Dennis Lloyd
Publisher



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Editor-in-Chief

Larry Angell

is iLounge's Senior Editor, specializing in daily news. Based in Ohio, Larry has covered Apple for years, owned nearly every iPod, and spent way too much on iTunes downloads. As founder of shopping sites Uncrate and Outblush, he currently lives with his girlfriend, cat, crazy numbers of cool gadgets, a revolving series of MacBooks, and a green nano.



Bob Levens

is iLounge's Chief Forum Administrator and a Contributing Editor to the site. Located in Cambridge, U.K., Bob has worked in such diverse career fields as the nuclear power industry, TV and radio engineering, the Royal Air Force and the Ministry of Defense. He lives with his wife, dog, and five iPods, impresses us with his culinary exploits, and is very likely listening to Shure E500 earphones right now.



Contributing Editors, Forum Admins, Mods, and Helpers: Jerrod Hofferth, Jesse Hollington, Alicia Bankhofer, Mike McKenney, Albert Tan, Audrey McGirt, Brett, Jed, Ryan, Stuart VandeVenter, Tom Levens, Andy Hedin, Aaron Steele, Doug Adams, and Deeg.

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A passionate, long-time fan of Apple products, **Dennis Lloyd** (dennis@ilounge.com) was a graphic designer and DJ before creating the iPodlounge and iLounge sites. Dennis directs our forums, photo galleries, and general business affairs, which have grown under his watch to include millions of readers and numerous accolades. Happily married with one dog (Rocket the Wonderdog), one cat (Ferris), many iPods, and two turntables, he lives in and loves Irvine, California.

Jeremy Horwitz (jeremy@ilounge.com) has written about consumer electronics for publications ranging from Electronic Gaming Monthly to The New York Times, having founded and edited Ziff-Davis' Intelligent Gamer magazine. A cum laude graduate of Cornell Law School, author and contributor to several books, Jeremy presides over editorial content for both iLounge.com and our Guides, focusing special attention on reviews and new technologies. He lives with his girlfriend, two dogs, a cat, and many rooms full of iPod add-ons in Mission Viejo, California.



Showtime, Minus the Big Screen. Apple's iPod event offers hints at plans for television and wide-screened video iPods; new colored nanos steal attention.

When Apple CEO Steve Jobs last year described the company's fifth-generation iPod as including "video as a bonus," the implication was clear: a bigger-screened video iPod was coming. Rumors swirled, almost a year passed, and finally Apple announced one of its famous Special Events: "It's Showtime," complete with spotlight art on the invitations. Movies were clearly the subject of the September 12 event (see sidebar), and so the audience salivated for one of Jobs' famous "One More Thing..." announcements, expecting to witness the introduction of a new widescreen iPod. Yet after two encores to his initial announcements, Jobs left the stage without a word about the one product everyone thought they'd see.

Instead, Jobs took the unusual step of previewing the tentatively-named iTV, a

wireless media router designed to bring an iTunes-equipped computer's music, TV shows, movies, photos and podcasts to high-definition television sets. Resembling a shorter, slightly wider version of the company's Mac mini computer, iTV featured HDMI and component video ports, wireless and wired Ethernet features, analog and optical audio ports, and mysteriously, a USB port and hard disk drive. The device included an updated version of last year's Front Row interface for Macintosh computers, complete with nicer graphics, more options, and most importantly, no need for a full-fledged Mac or PC to be connected to your television set. Problems? It's expensive, not scheduled for release until early 2007, and may require your computer to be turned on to work. We're hoping Apple has good answers to these issues by next year.

The other announcements were less profound: in succession, Jobs debuted brighter-screened, longer video playback 5G iPods, five iPod mini-like aluminum iPod nanos, and a smaller, similarly metal-clad iPod shuffle, all at lower prices than last year's models, and with a new peak capacity of 80GB. Feature-wise, they're not stunners - the screened iPods now offer gapless playback of albums and library searches by alphabetical characters, while the shuffle preserves most of its prior functionality - but during the holidays, the small aesthetic and big battery tweaks will be enough to keep the iPod rolling. Just unveiling the first red-colored, charitable iPod nano (PRODUCT) RED Special Edition in October was enough to score Apple an appearance on Oprah and plenty of publicity; however, in 2007, we think the world will expect bigger, cooler things.



iTunes 7. Movies and games join the renamed iTunes Store.

The addition of downloadable movies to iTunes was inevitable, but the prices weren't: Apple stuck to its guns to offer across-the-board \$9.99 pricing for catalog (read: not recent) movies, but was forced to offer new releases at \$14.99, discounted to \$12.99 for pre-orders and first-day sales. iTunes videos now come at 640x480 resolution, up from 320x240. Apple also announced a suite of 9 newly downloadable, higher-performance games for the fifth-generation iPod, each priced at \$4.99, available immediately from the rebadged "iTunes Store."



iLounge Evolution. Along with improvements to our main page, iLounge.com now boasts improved review search options and increasingly popular Discussion Forums. Here are some of our biggest updates.

1

Recent reviews

Ultimate Ears triple.fi 10 Pro Earphones
Logitech AudioStation High-Performance Stereo System for iPod
Logitech FreePulse Wireless Headphones
Sonic Impact i-P22 Portable Speaker System for iPod
ShieldZone InvisibleShield Full Body Shield for iPod nano (Aluminum)

recent first looks

recent articles

Ten Rules for Buying Apple Products
Enhanced iPod 5G, iPod nano 2G and iPod shuffle 2G: The iPod Economy Reacts
New nano Records Audio: Welcome, Podcasters

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Motorola KRZR arrives

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3

Reviewed: Three iPod Sport Remote Controls

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4

First Looks: iRecord Direct-to-iPod Recorder

First Looks | Show Previous Story | Show Next Story | Pause Stories
Just added: The new iRecord from Streaming Networks allows you to instantly create iPod ready video files from any currently playing TV show or video, with only three button presses. First pictures are inside.

There are 27 members and 124 guests reading the forum.

Most users ever online was 1,423, 02-11-2006 at 06:53 PM.
J. Horvitz, alsk, archesdevil, archurban, baggers, d bear, Dustkiking, Fawn, francinomad, Hank, honeybee1236, ilvzelda-64, JonnyO, keevill, kornchild2002, maverick777, mdscriber3, mnhyhough, Netty, Nickster, nitzer280, Rickzx6, SFGiantsFan, Skywong, St00pid, SurfBum, VipFREAK

Forum stats:

Threads: 158,483, Posts: 981,576, Members: 101,824
Welcome to our newest member, keevill

5

Today's Birthdays

Chadian22, mssilver94, leiah, iamFilo, WJoeTrojan, Igman, junjie72, mr.isaac.ng, Veneficus, iPod Video, Annapanna, Macfire 78 (56), Mark E. Rosen DO (53), mickwagner@cox. (52), Binky007 (49), Ric Easton (48), Scott Blackman (46), eric schnettler (46), cherry (45), scarbello07 (44), habemus r us (44), Bray (42), Toon No 9 (41), jolemale (40), Mimosa (40), jlbrock44 (39), stew karr (38), Like2playinsf (38), dgb93 (38), emptypod (37), Thebox (37), macboyinsf (35), Donte (35), pucker21 (35), Toddy71 (35), petteri (34), Tlover (34), tattoodjedi (33), nio_page (33), kmck (33), J.C. (33), djbe (32), imads (32), wolff (32), dauber (32), Castor2641 (32), elwrenn (31), BarnsleyPod (31), kriscoikisses (31), plwmodis (31), daltonrooney (30), victorlimck (30), Gavatron (29), ogowzard (29), shabzinka (29), MiMarrocolo (29), joshua1three (29), keffoonline (29), B2H (28), PUDDY (28), Ship Wreck (28), coveyyrains (28), SidBhalla (27), Ricardinho (27), SimaVic (27), trify (27), Sleep For Hours (27), foyb (27), KaseR (27), rik (26), neil_longley (26), Bleebdat (26), Okita Maiku (26), dulcimer1980 (26), cavvyclub (26), Xylus (25), jace989 (25), Dizzle (25), Harrobbad (25), Verloc (25), TracyR11ea (25), Robert23s (25), demonhalo (24), Jam (24), Soniku (24), flaminhammer (24), Sideonecincy (23), Stephens (23), Cybertonian (23), ickmylaic0 (23), GPRTUK (22), Break (22), ConfusedNazgul (22), gberill (22), bern (22), Fundex (21), Snyderman (21), flynn (21), ipod95 (21), waterboy100 (21), tebithe310 (21), lamlica (21), superlooper (20), erip600 (20), peqrk (20), nihai310 (19), whatahappycat (19), Calum_ah (19), C. Marley (19), ElDarko (19), c4yne (19), iPod88 (18), ryan312 (18), captainsteve (18), Lax15life22 (17), jmw360 (17), princepsiky (17), won (17), Eispattan (17), 31M0 (16), JKw1234 (16), downlikewah (16), fallen_one352 (16), futzy99 (16), tuazon (15), TheJosher (15)

review grades

Sort alphabetically and by category

Sort by ratings and categories

6

Cases - iPod 5G (with Video)

Aquarius iJacket for iPod 5G and nano A-

Boomwave Podstar Diablo for iPod video A-

Capdase Crystal Clear Cases for iPod nano and 5G A-

Contour Design Showcase video 30/60 A-

ifrogz wrapz Customizable Cases for iPod 5G and nano A-

iSkin eVo3 for iPod 5G (with video) A-

Marware Sidewinder for iPod video and nano A-

Otter Products OtterBox for iPod video A-

Pods Plus Aluminum V2 Case for iPod Video A-

Power Support Illusion Cases for iPod and iPod nano A-

Speck Products SkinTight for iPod 5G A-

Over the last several months, the content on iLounge.com has been expanding by leaps and bounds, so we've been working to make the most important additions easy to find. Here are some of the improvements we've made, if you haven't discovered them already.

The left-hand column of our main page has been overhauled. Our new **Featured and Popular Content Bar (1)** provides access to most of the site's newest and best content in colorful bars that open or close, and can be moved to your choice of positions. You'll also find a new **iPod Storage Calculator (2)** to help you figure out how to best compress iPod music. Additionally, recent changes to our **Navigation Bar (3)** have simplified its layout, using drop-down menus and consuming less space.

We've also updated the site's **Top Stories (4)**, which used to be two in number unless you reloaded the page, bringing up another two at random. Now the two Top Story blocks automatically load many recent updates, and scroll through them while you watch. You can also skip forwards and backwards from story to story at will.

In September, our **Discussion Forums (5)** hit a major milestone - with a little help from Alycia Kohler of New Jersey (and 99,999 other people), we hit the 100,000 registered users mark, keeping iLounge the largest iPod community on the planet. Separately, our Reviews section now has a great **Sort by Rating (6)** feature, allowing you to more easily find the best (and worst) accessories in each of the site's numerous accessory categories.



Making Music Merry!

*All 'Made for iPod' mStation 2.1 Stereo iPod Docking Station/Speakers come with a 10 Key Remote and work with all the latest iPod models including the new iPod nano. For more information or to purchase online you can visit our website at www.mStationAudio.com. **Apple iPod Sold Separately.



Design the iLounge Ad Contest

Contest: iLounge's Fifth Birthday. We've been publishing iPod and iTunes information since 2001; now our birthday's coming up in mid-November. Celebrate with us - who knows, maybe you'll get our gifts?



Grand Prize: White Apple MacBook + 80GB iPod



**Second Place:
Black 80GB iPod**



**Third Place:
4GB iPod nano,
Winner's Choice**

To celebrate our fifth birthday, we wanted to give away a few great prizes to our loyal readers - the MacBook and iPod combo above (est. retail value: \$1448), a black 80GB iPod (est. value: \$349) and a 4GB iPod nano (est. value: \$199) - with a simple, creative contest. **Design an effective, interesting online ad for iLounge - a banner, a badge, an emailable greeting card, a photograph, or any combination - and submit it to our iLounge Ad Contest Gallery.** You can use any type of artwork or photography, and as long as it's visually appealing and tasteful, we'll consider it for judging. You may submit as many images as you want, but they must be your original work, and each must contain the phrase "iLounge.com." Use of our logo is acceptable, but our three winners will be selected on overall quality as determined by iLounge's editors. [Visit our official iLounge Ad Contest page at ilounge.com/adcontest](http://ilounge.com/adcontest) for submission links and further details.

Official Rules: No purchase is necessary to enter. The Design the iLounge Ad Contest begins on Nov. 1, 2006 and ends on Dec. 1, 2006 at 11:59PM Pacific Time. Entries will be judged by iLounge. Do not enter if you can't stand losing, and don't disparage the winners. Entrants must submit full-sized, high resolution images of 1600x1200 or greater size immediately on request of iLounge. Winners will be announced on iLounge in December, 2006. You may submit as many entries as you want. This contest is open to U.S. and international residents. Must be 18 years or older to enter. Void where prohibited. By submitting, you agree that all private information, art, and photographs you submit become the property of iLounge, and that you will not and have not submitted such photographs to any other contest. Associates, employees, principals, or relatives thereof of iLounge are not eligible. All taxes are the responsibility of the winners. iLounge reserves the right to modify these terms to comply with the laws of the State of California, to correct errors and omissions, or to ensure fairness as determined by iLounge. Such modifications, if any, will be posted at iLounge. Your entry implies and expresses your agreement to these terms and your waiver of any other rights, related to such giveaways, you may have in any jurisdiction.

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- 3 programmable station presets
- Simple 3-button control



iPod screen displays station info.



iEZClick™

Wireless remote control for your active life.

- Control your iPod while it's protected in your backpack, jacket, or case
- Rugged weather resistant design
- Oversized buttons for ease of use when you're snowboarding, jogging, or simply commuting
- Reliable radio frequency RF remote control



iSplitter™ 200

Connect two sets of headphones.

- Share music and movies on the go
- Dual volume controls let you both listen in comfort at your own volume level
- Built-in mute switch
- Standard 1/8 inch mini headphone jack plugs into any MP3, CD, or DVD player



iTVLink™

Show photos and movies on your TV.

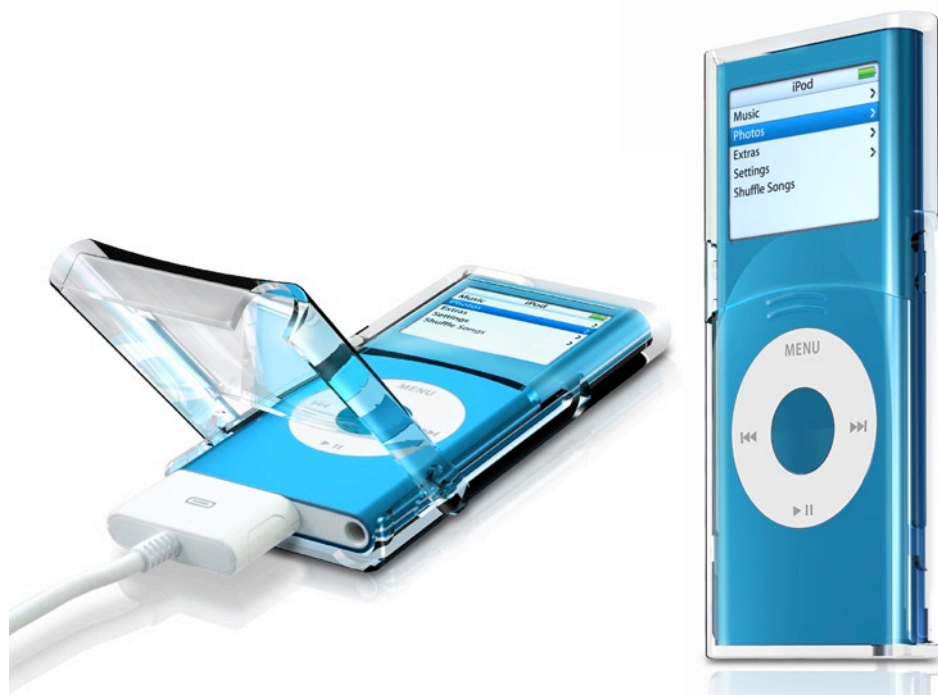
- Extra-Long 10ft. (3.04m) S-video and stereo audio cables
- High-performance cable shielding and insulation for better picture and sound
- Dual balanced conductors for more natural sound reproduction



sneak peeks

Virtually every accessory in our Buyers' Guides has been tested by iLounge's editors, but Sneak Peeks is unique - brand new items are premiered here first. As always, wait for our official reviews: features may change.

iPod nano (2G) Cases. Every change to the body design of an iPod forces companies to retool or create entirely new cases. Though only a hair thinner than before, the new nano's curved sides and shifted bottom ports have inspired leading companies to create substantially new shields - the best upcoming ones are here.



Marware Slyder

We've seen a hundred clear cases for iPods, but never one quite like this: **Marware's Slyder** (\$25) uses a cell-phone inspired design to keep your second-generation iPod nano's screen covered at all times, exposing the Click Wheel only when you slide out the bottom front half of the case. After sliding out, that piece can be flipped upwards for easy synchronization, as well. It will be available in November.



Pacific Design Molded Leather Skins

Leather cases for the iPod nano are almost always designed with flip-closed faces; thankfully **Pacific Design** is trying something different and more visually interesting with its **Molded Leather Skin Cases** (\$30). At least three versions will be available - pink and white, green and white, and black and gray - each with a black carabiner hook attached right above the nano's headphone port. They'll be available directly from Pacific Design's web site in early 2007.



Power Support Silicone Square Type, Round Type, and Crystal Jackets

Japan's **Power Support** had one of its strongest products back in the iPod mini days, when it released the unique Square Type Silicone Jacket, an iLounge favorite because of its durable, surgical grade silicone rubber, and ability to transform a mini into a little, ice-like translucent box. Now **Square Type** (\$25), its more conventional rubber brother **Round Type** (\$25), and a revised hard plastic **Crystal Jacket** (\$20) are all coming for the second-generation iPod nano. Each case includes Click Wheel protection - the rubber cases have it built-in, as well as Crystal Film screen protectors, a detachable plastic clip, and a silicone Dock Connector port cover. Expect all three in December.



PDO Aluminum N2

As a second-generation nano version of its prior Aluminum V2 cases for fifth-generation iPods, **Aluminum N2** by **Pods Plus/PDO** (\$30) retains the key improvement of its predecessor: a fully protective shell consisting of anodized aluminum, a clear hard plastic screen protector, and a silicone rubber Click Wheel guard. Three black aluminum cases will be available, one each with black, pink, and blue-colored Wheel covers, and one silver case with a black guard will also be sold, all available from PDO at the beginning of November.



H2O Audio Outdoor Housing

Well-established for its series of advanced waterproof iPod cases, **H2O Audio** is leveraging similar technologies in its **Outdoor Housing for iPod nano** (\$40), which isn't designed to be submerged, but rather to be used for active sports applications. Sleeker and lighter but still "all-element resistant," the Outdoor Housing will ship with an armband, and preserve its predecessors' best-of-breed Click Wheel control panel. It should be available by December.

Rediscover your music



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- Sync it all with your iPod
- Discover new music

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Too much music, too little time? The Filter is here to help!

It is very easy to use. Simply download the free software, highlight one or two songs that typify what you want to listen to from your iTunes library and The Filter will generate a playlist for you that suits the mood you are in.

> THE FILTER - AUTOMATIC PLAYLISTS ON YOUR IPOD OR MOBILE PHONE

It saves hours of your time and will rekindle your love of your music collection.

PLAYLISTS ON YOUR IPOD

And that is not all The Filter has to offer. How often have you had your iPod on shuffle and ended up on the treadmill listening to Joy Division instead of Basement Jaxx?

The iPod Filler function will put an end to that by creating playlists for specific activities, such as getting to work or going to the gym. And what's more it will refresh those playlists each and every time you sync your iPod (or compatible player)

DOWNLOAD FOR FREE

The Filter is available now for Win XP and iTunes at www.thefilter.com. The Mac OS X, WinAMP and Windows Media Player versions follow soon after.



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no more scratches!!!



ALUMINUMN2

screen and clickwheel protection



A- highly recommended
by iLounge

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2007 iPod Buyers' Guide

sneak peeks



Sena MagnetFlipper

As leather cases are concerned, **Sena's** flip-open designs were on the verge of predictability until **MagnetFlipper** (\$35 and up) came along. The flip-shut lid covers only the Click Wheel, leaving the screen showing with a clear integrated protector. Seventeen premium leather options are available, each sealed with a magnetic clasp.

a.b. sutton Slip for 2G nano

With every iteration, **a.b. sutton's** handmade cases for iPods become better. The second-generation iPod nano version of its **Slip** case (\$68) is no exception: with a cotton inner layer and leather in your choice of colors ("wood" is shown), the case features an integrated screen protector and a "cable tuck" on the back to let you keep your earbuds wrapped up, rather than loose in your bag. Men's and women's versions are expected in mid-November.



Sumo Cases Click Flip

An evolution of **Sumo Cases'** past Flip cases for iPod nanos, the new **Click Flip** (\$30) no longer forces you to compromise on iPod access while inside. Available in mid-November in five colors (red's not shown), Click Flip is a full-grain leather case with a color-tinted clear Click Wheel protector, a magnetic latched flap that covers the iPod's screen part time, and an around the neck strap that can be detached if you prefer.



Core Cases Aluminum Case

In one of the more complete nano case redesigns we've seen for the new iPod nano, **Core Cases** has updated its popular **Aluminum Cases** (\$20) with a new shape that preserves the two-piece slide-in/slide-out design of its predecessor, but now uses different types of aluminum: an anodized front and a polished back, both there to absorb scratches so your nano doesn't have to. A rubber piece at the bottom keeps your Dock Connector port covered, but exposes the headphone port for connection to most earphones. Black and silver versions will be available in mid-November; more may follow.

iPod (5G) Cases. Case makers breathed a big sigh of relief when Apple opted to keep the fifth-generation iPod around for another holiday season - they didn't have to create new designs. As such, there aren't lots of new options for this iPod, but we picked a few that we felt were worth showing off in our Sneak Peeks section.



iPodMod's iVue Crystal Cases for iPod

It's been done for PlayStations and Xboxes - now the clear replacement case phenomenon is set to explode on the iPod. **iPodMod's** plans a series of **iVue Crystal Cases for iPods** (\$20-35, installed) which will remove your iPod's original front shell and replace it with an enclosure that lets you see all the components inside. Versions for the 5G iPod, 4G iPod, and nano are planned for release in the next two months, with iPod mini shells also in the offing for later release. Multiple translucent colors will be available.



Core Cases Swivel Hinge

The flip-open, "ready for video" iPod case has been done lots of times before, but **Core Cases'** new **Swivel Hinge 5G** (\$30) has a new twist, literally. A patented rotary hinge flips the lid backwards and around to serve as a stand for the 5G iPod. The aluminum body is bolstered by film for the screen and Click Wheel. Expect it in December.

Sena Video Premium Stand

Like MagnetFlipper for nano, **Sena's Video Premium Stand** (\$40-50) is a flip-open leather case with 17 different color options and textures, including croc, but this one acts as a stand for the 5G when opened.



Vaja iVod Silver Special Edition

Every time **Vaja** releases a new case, the world stands up and takes notice. Its newest design, **iVod Silver** (\$TBA) steps up a notch over the company's earlier iVod case for fifth-generation iPods, adding polished sterling silver edging appliques to the screen and Click Wheel holes in the front of the case. Premium puffed leathers in your choice of several colors continue to be used for the remainder of the body, with Dock Connector, headphone port, and Hold switch access guaranteed by additional holes in the top and bottom. Belt clips will be available as options.

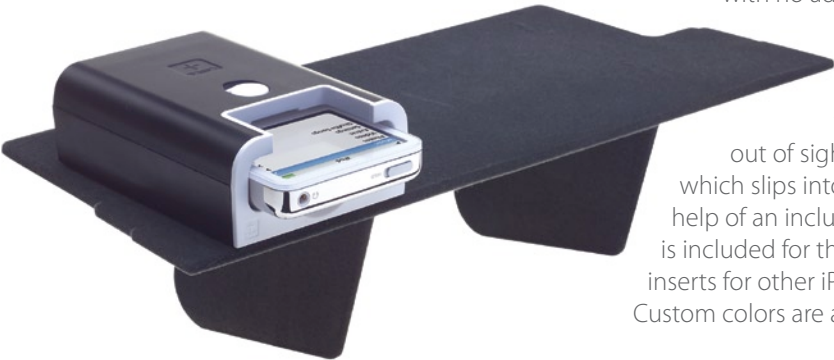


Car Add-Ons. All things old are new again - at least, that's what it seems like these days. Many past accessories are being cosmetically and functionally tweaked to appeal to a new generation of iPod buyers, while modestly new add-ons are improving upon similar prior products. Here's what's coming.



SendStation CruiseControl

Created as the "world's first true iPod steering wheel remote control," **SendStation's CruiseControl** RF (radio frequency) remote adds track forward and backward, play/pause, volume and shuffle songs buttons to virtually any car steering wheel. Planned for release in early 2007, CruiseControl has already won an International Forum Product Design Award; pricing is not yet available.

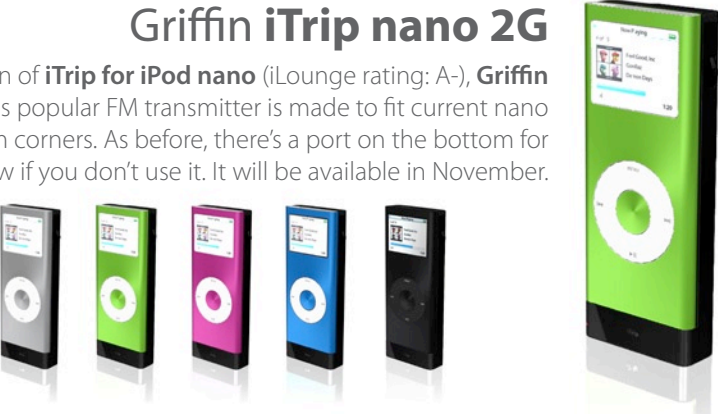


TEN Technology iRide

Designed to match the interiors of most cars' glove compartments, **iRide** from **TEN Technology** (\$79) is a novel mounting system for any iPod, connected one time to an included Glove Box Organizer and then left inside the car. The idea is to give you a one-step docking solution - enter car and drop iPod inside, with no additional work. You provide the car integration kit, which is tethered to iRide - potentially out of sight - and the iPod, which slips into iRide's dock with the help of an included insert. One insert is included for the price; additional inserts for other iPods are sold for \$10. Custom colors are also available.

Griffin iTrip nano 2G

Like the last excellent iteration of **iTrip for iPod nano** (iLounge rating: A-), **Griffin Technology's** new version (\$50) of this popular FM transmitter is made to fit current nano models, using matching rounded bottom corners. As before, there's a port on the bottom for in-car charging, and battery drain is low if you don't use it. It will be available in November.



NewerTech TrafficJamz

As a more complex sequel to the company's earlier RoadTrip+ (iLounge rating: B+), **TrafficJamz** from **Newer Technology** (\$35) continues to combine an iPod charger and FM transmitter into a single accessory, this time adding an integrated LCD screen for station tuning. As the prior RoadTrip models broadcast on only one station, but typically did so with a powerful signal, we'll be very interested to see how this does upon its December release date.



In-Home/On-the-Go Gear. Upcoming wireless earphones, iPod docks, speakers, and battery chargers are getting ready to transform the way you enjoy your iPod. Here are a few highlights from what's next.



Etymotic Ety8 Wireless Earphones

Perhaps the smallest stereo wireless headset out there, **Etymotic's** new **Ety8** (\$299 with iPod adapter, \$199 without) combines the styling of ER-4 series in-canal earbuds with two lightweight boxes containing wireless Bluetooth components and a 6-9 hour battery, plus a cable to connect them. Your iPod connection is handled via a bottom-mounting transmitter that's small enough to fit on an iPod nano, and control of tracks, play/pause, and volume is handled remotely via buttons on one earpiece, which can be flipped to either ear. Multiple

silicone rubber and foam ear flanges are included, as are extra filters, a cleaning tool, and a leather carrying case. Expect Ety8 by late December.



SendStation PocketDock AV

As the most aggressive PocketDock design yet to emerge from Germany's **SendStation**, **PocketDock AV** (\$35) is a tiny iPod Dock Connector accessory with line-out, S-Video, and USB ports on its bottom. A multipurpose included cable provides both S-Video and Composite video outputs, left and right RCA audio, and a standard USB plug for connection to a charger or computer. With this single accessory, you're able to connect your iPod to virtually any TV or monitor, stereo audio system, and power source.

Griffin TuneJuice II

As a substantial departure from **Griffin Technology's** earlier TuneJuice for iPods, which added a handful of hours of battery life off of a single 9-Volt battery, **TuneJuice II** (\$30) promises to run your iPod for in excess of 14 hours off of a set of AAA batteries instead. The concept is still the same: provide a small, cheap charger that can be recharged with batteries found at any store. It's coming in December.



Griffin AmpliFi 2.1 Tabletop Speaker System

We've known that **Griffin Technology** has been working on iPod speaker systems for a while - our guess was that they've been trying to guarantee that their final products sounded as good as they looked. According to company representatives, the brand-new **AmpliFi** (\$150) - a clean-looking, acoustically tuned wooden enclosure for a 2.1-channel tabletop speaker system - sounds "amazing" for the price, providing "unbelievably room-filling sound from your desktop." With two 2.75" speakers for the highs and mids, plus a dedicated 5" woofer and port for bass, AmpliFi has an iPod-charging dock on top with six adapters, plus a stereo input jack on the back for auxiliary audio sources such as iPod shuffles. A slim Infrared remote will be included to control volume and docked iPod functionality. Expect it in the first quarter of 2007.



Griffin Voyager Portable Speakers

If you're actually planning to travel with the portable-sized speakers you buy for an iPod, you might want to keep your investments protected on the road. **Griffin Technology's** upcoming **Voyager Portable Speaker System** (\$130) has a unique solution - a protective hard rubber skin that pulls off the unit's body, then tucks into its base to serve as a stand. And it's not short on other features, either: it comes with a Griffin-standard PowerBlock AC adapter to recharge its integrated Lithium-Ion battery - the latter a rarity at this price point - plus a thin Infrared remote control, which can be stored in a recess when not in use. Besides a pad-based adjustable iPod dock in the center, ports in the back provide auxiliary and USB inputs and outputs (yes, there's audio out, too). Like AmpliFi, Voyager is planned for release in the first quarter of 2007.

THE IPOD HOME

Most of our coverage of iPods and accessories takes place in a vacuum - we go out of our way to show everything against neutral white or black backdrops. This year, we wanted to do something different. Enter The iPod Home, a showcase for how the ever-expanding worlds of iPods and their accessories now integrate into any room of a house. Except as noted, all of the products shown in the Home are described in greater depth elsewhere in the Guide.

A. Zen touch: Not featured elsewhere in this Guide, **JBL's Radial** (\$300) delivers very good sound quality in a beautiful, circular plastic and metal enclosure. Black or white versions are available, each with silver speaker grilles and a chrome base. The included RF remote control offers significant iPod control from afar, and there's enough volume here to fill a room. A smaller, more affordable version called **Radial Micro** (\$129, not shown) is coming soon.

The Entryway



A

2007 iPod Buyers' Guide



A. Room with a view: **Memorex's** battery-powered **iFlip** offers full-sized iPod users any time, any where access to an 8.4" screen and speakers for bigger video playback. Two earphone ports let it work quietly, too, if you don't want to put on a show.

B. Listen in peace: No matter what's happening in the room, **Logitech's Noise-Cancelling Headphones** cover your ears and let your music shine through. **Sumajin's SmartWrap** (\$10, not elsewhere in Guide) keeps cables from dangling.

C. Make a statement: **Saffire's JukeBox Station** offers old-fashioned but remote-controlled access to a docked iPod from almost anywhere in a room. At night, you can turn on the lights and bask in the glow - assuming you like its short (3') stature.

C

The Living Room



A. Time and style: Small enough to place in any available kitchen nook, **JBL's On Time** provides a clock, AM/FM radio, alarms, and a complete iPod speaker dock with high style - only a step under the company's Radial in sound. We love the blue dome light, and choice between white and black versions.

B. Chocolat: **Sonic Impact's Video-55** gives you a clean 7" screen, dual speakers and a remote control, all ready for movie or TV show viewing from your video iPod. It's perfect for widescreen Iron Chef or Emeril re-runs in the kitchen, but an equally good travel or bedside partner - the best today for video.

C. Under cabinet, out of sight: **iHome's iH36** is the only iPod speaker system designed to occupy zero counter space, and features a retractable iPod dock, remote control, and integrated clock/radio tuner. Mounting instructions and a kit help you place it under virtually any cabinet in any room.



A. Boom shock a lock: Thanks to its ability to run off of batteries or wall power, **Altec Lansing's iM7** boom box fits just as well on a mantle, desk, or bookshelf as it does in a garage or outdoors, providing surprisingly excellent sound no matter where it goes.

B. Almost famous: As long as there's an FM radio around, **Griffin's iKaraoke** microphone will let you sing along to any of your iPod's tunes, doing its best to strip out their vocals and let you display whatever lyrics you've saved for your songs.

C. Charge or stream: **Apple's** new **iPod USB Power Adapter** is much smaller than the old one shown on the floor; its **AirPort Express** wireless adapter lets you stream iTunes songs to any home stereo.

D. On-screen dreams: Browse your iPod music library on any TV with **Griffin's TuneCenter**, which also can connect to your computer's router to provide access to Internet Radio stations.



A. Work in comfort: AKG's k701 headphones are as good for your ears as a great chair is for your back, providing velvety isolation, great fit, and amazingly rich, detailed sound. You won't want to get up, take them off, or trade them for earbuds.

B. Take dictation: New XtremeMac, Griffin, and Belkin recorders all have built-in microphones, letting any fifth-generation iPod or second-generation iPod nano take voice memos or record CD-quality stereo audio.

C. Think big: Compatible with both Macs and PCs, ViewSonic's 22" ViewDock monitor has an iPod dock for synchronization; Altec Lansing's powerful FX6021 speakers (\$250, not shown elsewhere in Guide) use 12 satellite drivers and a subwoofer.



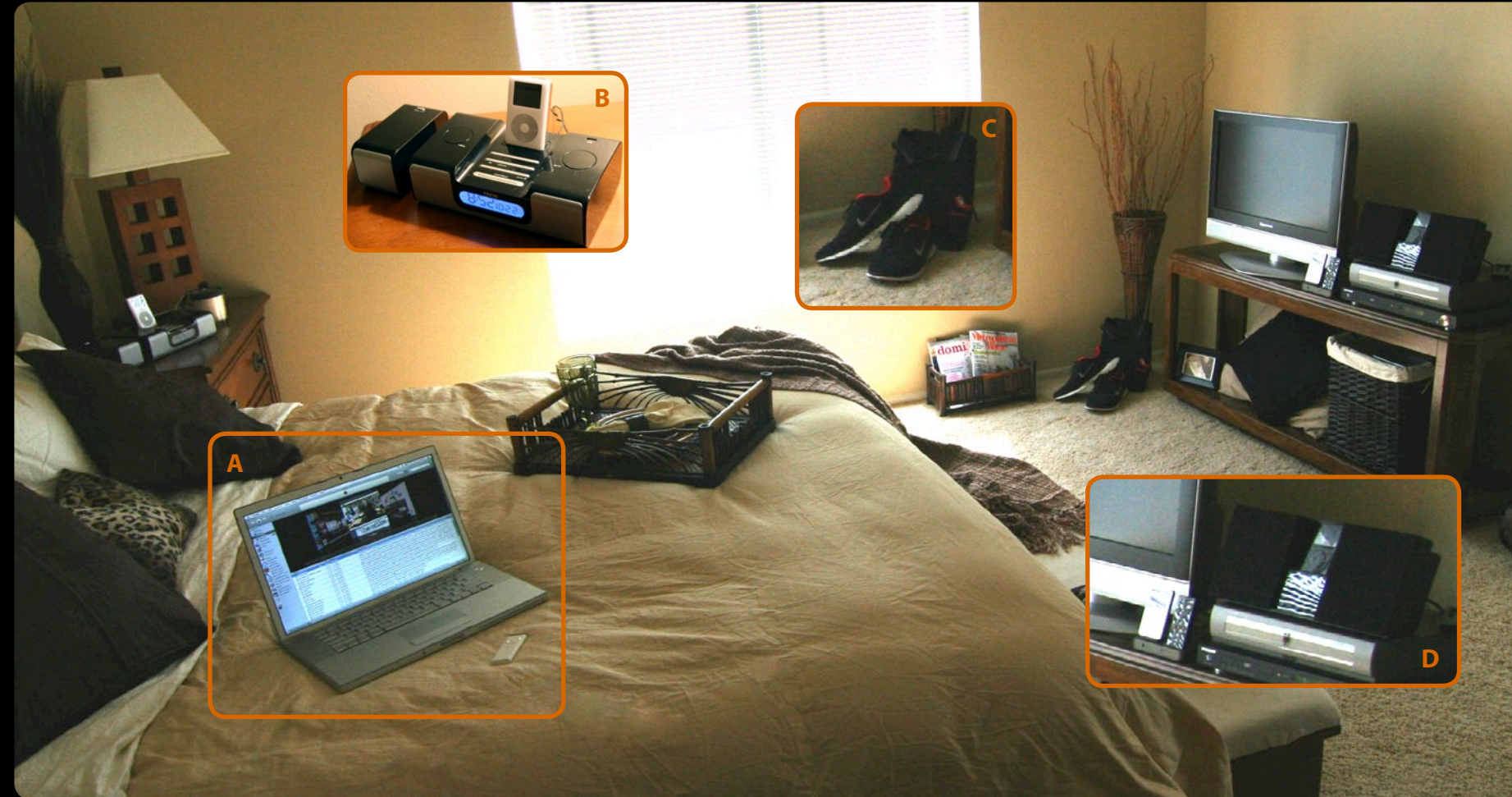
A. Listen without tangles: Logitech's FreePulse Wireless Headphones provide a clear-sounding, long-distance listening option that works with any iPod, even when you've walked a couple of rooms away. Bluetooth 2.0+EDR is the technology inside.

B. Expanded IO, not in Guide: JVC's NX-PS1 (\$250) provides a three-speaker system - with a remote - that's ready for iTunes or your iPod. And Logitech's S 530 Laser keyboard and mouse set (\$100) includes a dedicated iTunes button and controls.

C. Flash and purr: AFT's iDuo dock lets you sync your iPod and read digital camera memory cards from a single, small device, while Hasbro's i-Cat is a fun little iPod-ready speaker for fans of felines, with an on-face light show and built-in sound effects.

The Master Bedroom

2007 iPod Buyers' Guide



A. Go pro: Reliable companions in bed, on the road, or in the office, **Apple's MacBook Pro** computers (\$1999 and up) are the ones we've used to produce this entire Guide - and store our iTunes libraries. The included **Apple Remote** lets you access Front Row, a unified music, video, and photo playback interface, but also works with Apple's iPod **Universal Dock** and **iPod Hi-Fi** stereo system, the latter shown in the next room.

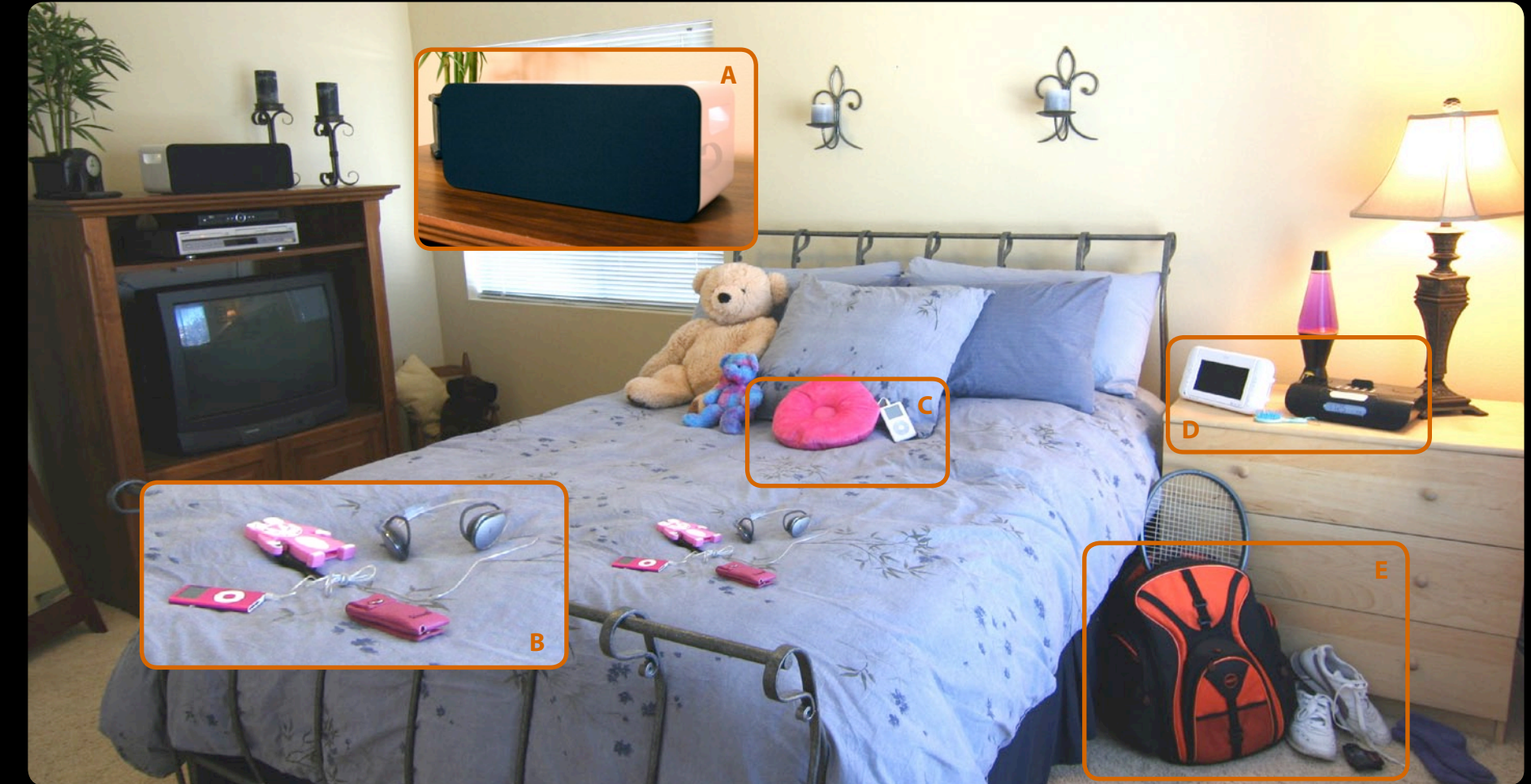
B. Wake up, wake up: The dual alarm, three-speaker **iHome iH7** alarm clock lets you wake two people to iPod music, a buzzer, or a radio; the third speaker can be moved to the bed's other side to stir any snoozer.

C. Keep it real: Even if Marware's Sensor+ lets you use the Nike + iPod Sport Kit with any pair of sneakers, **Nike's** original **Nike+ Air Zoom Moire** shoes (\$100) are worth the price, and match our favorite iLounge shirts.

D. Big picture, big sound: Take your pick - **DLO's HomeDock Deluxe** lets you browse your iPod music library on a TV, or switch to the iPod's screen to navigate videos. Or use **Logitech's AudioStation** to provide big, powerful iPod and TV sound, along with a built-in clock and AM/FM radio, all remote controllable.

2007 iPod Buyers' Guide

The Student's Bedroom



A. Listen loud: Visually neutral in the right setting, **Apple's iPod Hi-Fi** speaker system (\$349, not featured in Guide) can do double-duty as an iPod and TV speaker system, thanks to its top dock, rear aux-in port, and simple remote control.

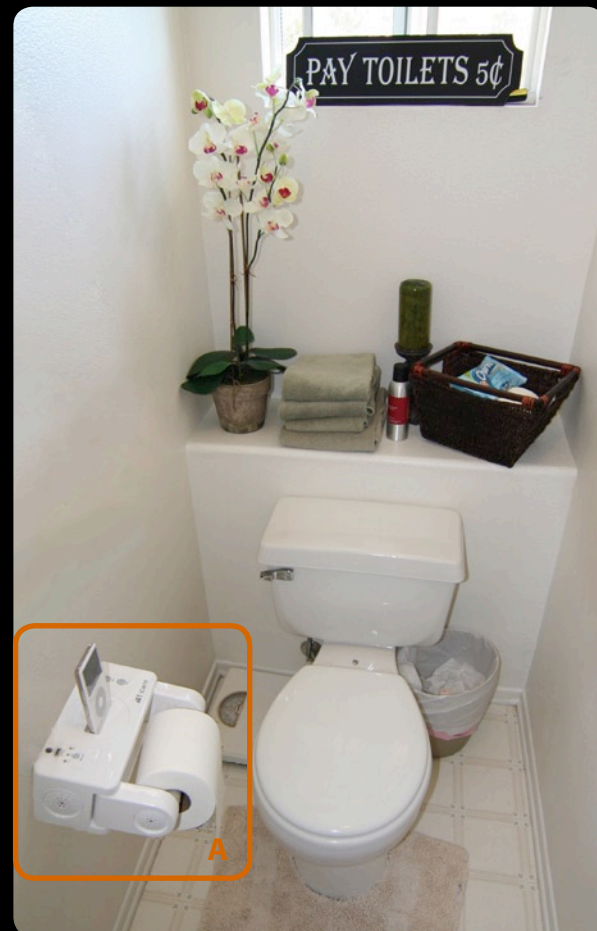
B. Think pink (not in Guide): **Kiwali Nanoki** (\$29) and **NanoMonsters** (\$20) cases match the pink iPod nano, while **Curve** headphones (\$30) from **Logitech** fit headband-style, not inside your ears.

C. Rest with the best: Sold at Bed, Bath, and Beyond, this **iConnect** branded speaker (not in Guide) is mounted inside a pillow, connecting to any iPod and playing music without batteries. Sound quality's acceptable for the \$10 price.

D. Love, love, love: **iLuv's i1055** combines an iPod video display dock and a DVD player in either white or black colors, while its **i177** clock radio offers dual alarms and dual speakers in the same two colors.

E. Pack and go: **Pacific Rim Technologies'** upcoming iPod-compatible backpack features an integrated glowing light band and strap-mounted remote control; **Marware's SportSuit Relay** (not shown in the Guide) lets you run with a Nike + iPod Sport Kit-compatible wristband.

The Bathroom



A. Dock and roll: No iPod Home would be complete without **AFT's iCarta**, the only iPod speaker system that doubles as a toilet paper holder. Mounting iCarta isn't hard, but you'll need to have a power outlet in your bathroom - and a pretty serious love for music - in order to use it.



B. Anywhere audio: By the tub or at the beach, **Ego's Music Showcase** provides a waterproof speaker and iPod enclosure that sounds good and looks cool. With a special iPod compartment, carrying strap, pop-out rear stand, and AA battery power, the Showcase will stay by your side or even float on water.

C/D. Bathroom buddies: Minus an iPod dock but plus an excellent radio, rechargeable battery and one speaker, **Tivoli Audio's iPAL** (\$130, C, not in Guide) fits anywhere and needs no wall power. **Tivoli's iSongBook** (D) is more expensive, but better: it has an iPod dock, two separate speakers, a clock, and fully digital radio, plus a battery option.

Available in 17 different leather styles and colors. A sexy and impressive expression.

Two-way snap closure transforms from slim protector to podium stand for viewing ease. The ideal marriage of form and function.

Look

Details

WHY PROTECT YOUR IPOD WITH **SENA?**

HERE ARE FOUR REASONS.

AVAILABLE AT SENACASES.COM
OTHER IPOD STYLES ALSO OFFERED

Quality



Luxury leather. Exquisite detail. Hand-crafted perfection.

Fit



Shock absorbent padding for protection. Slim design with openings for all ports. Each and every detail considered.





iKaraoke

Karaoke for Your iPod

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LOUNGE
2005
BEST
ACCESSORY
MAKER - IPOD



iTalk Pro

High-Quality Stereo Mic for iPod



TuneCenter

Home Media Center for iPod



iTrip Auto

FM Transmitter and Car Charger for iPod



CenterStage

Flip-Stand Case for iPod

The 2007 iPod Buyers' Guide.

This was supposed to be a year of great change. Instead, Apple's latest iPod lineup is a modest evolution of last year's lineup, with a more durable nano, smaller shuffle, and brighter-screened full-sized iPod. Which is right for you? Our comprehensive look at the iPod family covers all past and present models, and offers buying and selling tips to help you make smart choices.

Every year, Apple makes strategic tweaks to the iPod family, but in 2006, the strategy seemed to be "don't change what's working." Just as was the case at the end of 2005, today's iPod family consists of three models: the low-end audio player **iPod shuffle** (\$79), the mid-range audio and photo player **iPod nano** (\$149-249), and the high-end audio, photo, video, and game player **iPod (with video)** (\$249-349). Today, the shuffle comes only in a 1-Gigabyte (240-song) model, while the iPod nano comes in 2GB (500 song), 4GB (1,000 song) and 8GB (2,000 song) capacities, varying between six colors by capacity, and the full-sized iPod is sold in 30GB (7,500 song) and 80GB (20,000 song) version.

Song capacity is today only one part of the iPod's appeal. Every iPod except the shuffle can store and display photographs, while the full-sized iPod can now play back TV shows, music videos, movies, and other video content on its screen. Apple's 30GB model can now play videos for 3.5 hours, while the 80GB model runs for 6.5 hours.

Like last year's iPods, every model today comes with two standard pack-ins: a pair of earbuds, and a USB cable that lets your iPod recharge and transfer files from a computer. iPods and nanos also include Universal Dock Adapters that allow them to physically mount properly in a growing number of dock-laden accessories, and full-sized iPods include fabric starter cases to keep their glossy bodies scratch-free. As an added bonus, the new iPod shuffle includes a miniature dock at the end of its USB cable, but it still doesn't work with the iPod's standard Dock Connector-equipped accessories, and is the only current iPod that comes with old Apple earbuds.

If you're looking for guidance on which iPod to buy, you've come to the right place. In the pages that follow, we'll help you understand as much as you want to know about today's iPods, and look back at every past model to provide some historical perspective. Unless you're an expert - and perhaps even if you are - you'll be amazed by how affordable, compact, and powerful today's iPods have become.

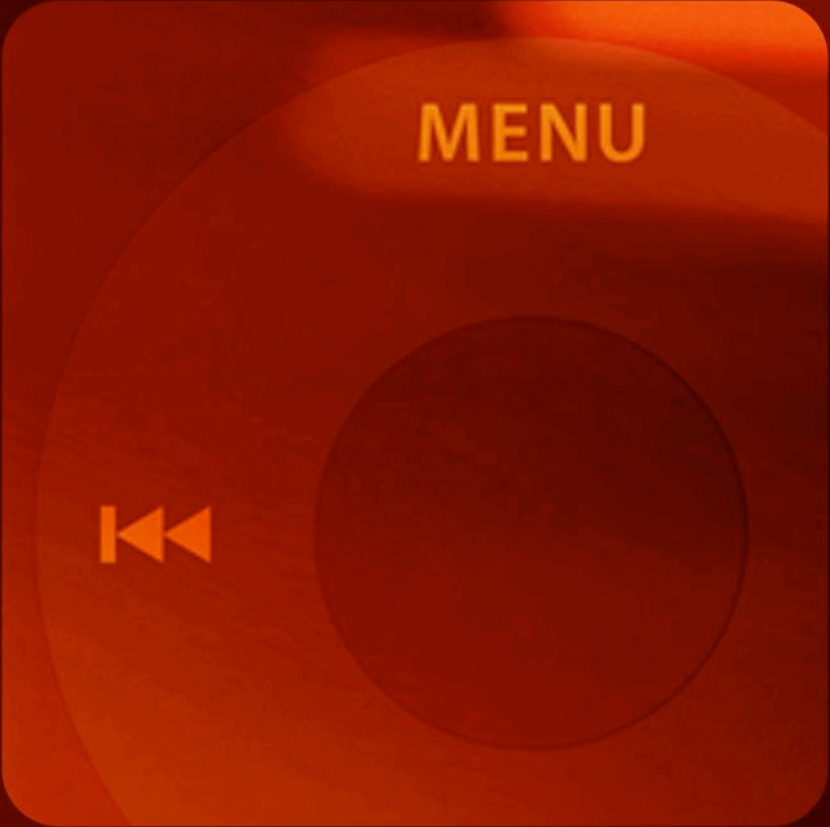


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iPod: Plays Everything. Up to 80GB.



Price: \$249-\$349 Ratings: A-, B+

Last year's iPod just got cheaper and brighter. Small screen and software tweaks let movies, TV shows and games shine, while a big 80GB hard disk option lets you store them - and music - for only \$349.

When Apple released the Fifth-Generation iPod (iLounge rating: A-/B+) in October, 2005, it was obviously holding back. Equipped with a 2.5" display, the new iPod's video features were billed only as a "bonus" to the world's most popular digital music player, and little else had changed from the prior iPod's photo- and album art-ready interface. Despite rumors that the new iPod could play games and movies, Apple said nothing.

Until September 2006. In announcing the **Enhanced Fifth-Generation iPod**, the company simultaneously unveiled brand new downloadable games and movies capable of playing on all 5G iPods, but best suited to the improved screens of the newer models. A partnership with Disney yielded access to \$10-\$15 feature films from four of that company's studios, and game developers such as Electronic Arts, Namco, and PopCap Games contributed mostly passable new \$5 iPod games.

Though today's iPod is still shy of perfection as a video player - limited content aside, the screen's still too small for long-length viewing and it's very hard to conveniently

view your own movies - the device remains exceptionally well-suited to audio library management and playback. Newly aided by gapless playback, a way to listen to flowing albums without track-to-track interruptions, the Enhanced 5G iPod's sound chip retains the clean, balanced sound signature of last year's model, and still provides the industry's easiest way to access all of your music. Today's games and movies are acceptable, and Apple has demonstrated with TV shows that it's capable of rapidly scaling the iTunes Store upwards in quantity and quality. Plus, as this year's form factors and key electronic components haven't changed from last year's, all prior 5G-compatible cases, speakers, and other add-ons continue to work perfectly.

With all of that said, should you buy today's full-sized iPod? We'd pass on the needlessly more expensive red and black **U2 iPod** (\$279, iLounge rating: B+), but at the historically low prices of \$249 for the standard 30GB model or \$349 for the much better 80GB model, these are hard deals to pass up. Hold off only if you need something with a bigger screen for video, or strongly prefer the smaller, lower-capacity iPod nano.

What's Been Enhanced This Year?

Capacity for the dollar. You now get 30GB of storage for \$249 and 80GB for \$349, Apple's best values yet.

The screen. It's 60% brighter than last year's, but still 2.5" in size, with a 320x240 resolution and 65,000 colors.

Video and photo playback time. Audio playback time remains at 14 (30GB) and 20 (80GB) hours, but the 30GB model now plays video for 3.5 hours and photos for 4, while the 80GB does video for 6.5 and photos for 6.

Searching. You can now search your library by alphabetical input, instantly locating artists, songs, and albums containing whatever characters you've entered.

2007 iPod Buyers' Guide

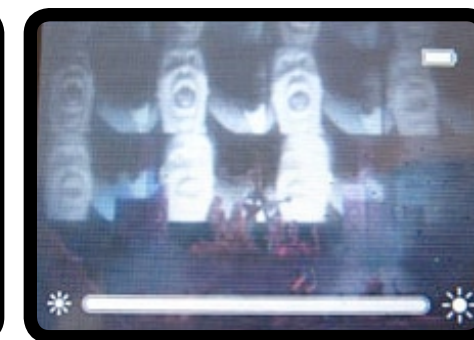
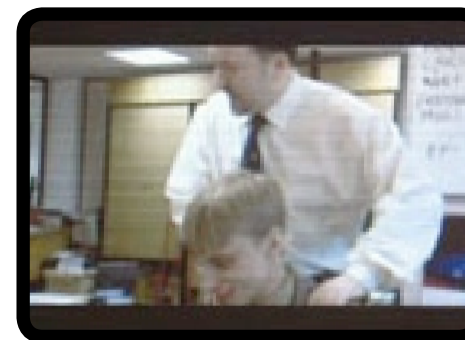
The iPod Family

Downloadable Games



iPods have been able to play games - very limited ones - for years, but now there are nine downloadable games (see our Game Reviews Section) that make special use of the 5G iPod's high-color screen and sophisticated graphics hardware. **Mahjong** (top) brings the classic Chinese tile-matching game to iPod users with great detail, colors, and ambience, while **Vortex** (bottom) wraps the classic brick-busting game Breakout around a 3-D well, letting you shatter moving stones with a metal ball. Unlike the iPod's other video content, games can only be displayed on the built-in screen, and their controls vary from smart to poor depending on title.

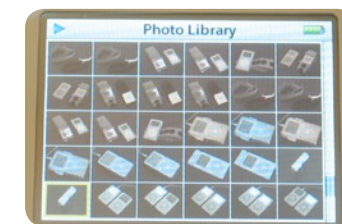
TV Shows, Movies, Music Videos, and More



Like last year's 5G iPods, this year's models can store and play back movies, TV shows, music videos, and user-generated content (see our latest Free iPod Book for details), but they're still limited less by the screen's quality than by its 2.5" size. Though Apple hasn't fixed the one thing users want most, they have improved the new model's rendition of colors, such that people look more natural and accurately fleshtoned than before, and small details are now

more clearly visible. Part of this is due to a new on-screen brightness control, which can be set separately for menus and videos, using up more battery at the 60% brighter than prior peak level. You can also watch videos on a TV or monitor connected to the iPod: we've already reviewed a series of portable add-on video displays and video goggles which are in some cases capable of displaying better-than-iPod-screen resolution content.

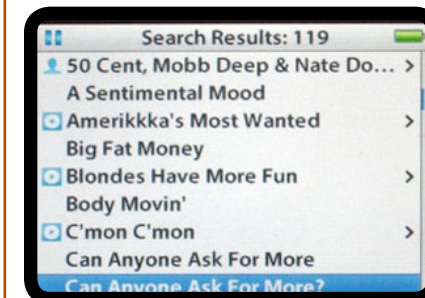
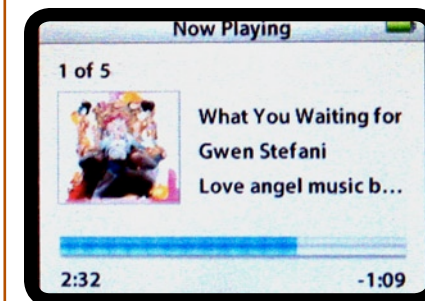
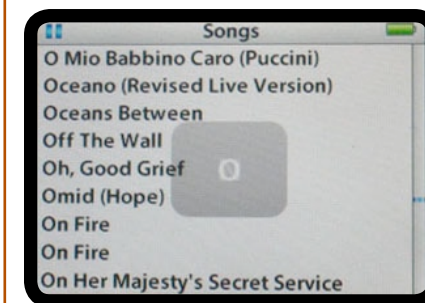
Photos and Slideshows



Little has changed about the iPod's photo display technology from last year. You can still see 30 thumbnail images on screen at a time, use 11 different transition effects (including some cool 3-D effects taken from Apple's iPhoto program for the Mac), and view individual photos using the iPod's larger, more detailed display. Unlike iPod nano, photo output to a TV is still possible, and there's an on-screen brightness control.

Music and Books

Music playback is stronger than ever: though there haven't been any major tweaks to the audio quality, album art, or standard browsing interfae, high-speed song scrolling is aided by large on-screen letters that tell you where you are, and there's a search engine.



i-Station

2.1 Subwoofer Speaker System for Quality Sound plus Docking Station for Recharging and Synchronization

NOW WITH REMOTE



The i-Station7 with multi-functioning remote control, offers the complete solution to listen, recharge, and synchronize your iPod.

This ultra-portable docking and speaker system from Logic3 delivers great power to enhance your digital music experience. With its stylish design, compact size and powerful sub-woofer, you can play your favourite tracks out loud, in the comfort of your home or on the go. The iStation7 is ideal for any model of iPod with a 30-pin connector.

iStation7, fill your world with music...

Available in Black and White

Logic3

Logic3.com

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Billet Aluminum Machined iPod® case

Made in the USA
Patent Pending



BILLET 6061 T-6

The **ITECTOR™** aluminum iPod® case provides a secure place to hold your iPod® while you do whatever it is you do, no matter how extreme it is. The billet case offers a patented slide and lock system that requires no tools, screws, magnets or clasps to open and close. Comes standard with removable belt clip and clear protective film. Other mounting systems optional.



AVAILABLE FOR:

- NANO 1G
- NANO 2G
- 30 GB VIDEO
- 80/60 GB VIDEO

POLISHED ANODIZED FINISH:

- PINK
- SILVER
- BLUE
- BLACK

MOUNTING SYSTEMS:

- CAR MOUNT
- HARD MOUNT
- RHINO MOUNT
- HANDLE BAR
- BELT CLIP

INCLUDED WITH CASE

ITECTOR™

www.itector.com

iEvolved: Music to Movies, 5 to 80GB.

Once upon a time, 5-Gigabyte iPods sold for \$399. Five years later, 80GB iPods sell for \$349, offering superior battery power, video and game playback features, and much more. Here's how it happened.

You surely know the basics of the full-sized iPod by now: every model released to date has a glossy plastic front and a bright polished metal back, plus five main buttons and a wheel for scrolling. But when Apple released its first-generation, music-only iPod (1) in November 2001, it only worked with Macs, and \$399 bought only five Gigabytes of storage. A FireWire port sat on top next to the headphone port and a Hold switch; its scroll wheel physically moved, and its five buttons were separate from the wheel's surface. This iPod had a flat face, and came with earbuds, a cable and a charger.

Months later, Apple released the second-generation iPod (2), which had a plastic-sealed FireWire port and a touch-sensitive, non-moving wheel. A \$499 10GB model came first, later dropping to \$399 when Apple released a \$499 20GB model and offered PC-ready versions. These iPods won about 1,000,000 fans - not more.

The third iPod (3) was a 2003 breakthrough. Slimmer and with soft front corners, its buttons moved above its wheel and became glowing, touch-sensitive surfaces. A bottom-mounted Dock Connector enabled this iPod to work with PC-friendly USB cables. Apple raised 3G's top capacity to 30GB, then 40GB before replacing it in 2004.

Summer 2004 saw the release of the black-and-white fourth-generation iPod (4), which was the first full-sized iPod to use the Click Wheel - a single touch-sensitive surface with buttons neatly hidden underneath, introduced in the iPod mini. Apple switched to a blue-backlit screen to cut costs, selling the 20GB iPod for only \$299, and 40GB for \$399. By October 2004, there was "iPod Photo", the first color-screened, photo-displaying version, sold in 40GB (\$499) and 60GB (\$599) capacities. It rapidly fell in price. Apple discontinued black-and-white iPods in June 2005, releasing color 20GB (\$299) and 60GB (\$399) photo-ready versions as "iPods" before their demise.

In October 2005, Apple released the "iPod (with video)" (5), which reverted to the first-generation iPod's flat face, now with a Click Wheel and black or white body color options. Sold in 30GB (\$299) and 60GB (\$399) capacities, the screen grew from 2" to 2.5" to make TV shows and music videos watchable, and Apple dropped support for top-mounted accessories and FireWire. By mid-September 2006, the company had debuted a brighter-screened Enhanced model with the same form factor, boasting even more impressive pricing: \$249 for the 30GB model and \$349 for an 80GB model. These iPods were touted as movie and game players, and had the space to store both.

35

iPod nano: Colored Metal, 2 to 8GB.



Price: \$149-\$249 Rating: A-

An anti-scratch, 8-Gigabyte nano? Infused with iPod mini DNA, the new nano now comes in six colors - including red or black - with familiar prices.

Ask anyone for their biggest pros and cons on last year's iPod nano (iLounge rating: A-/B+), and two of the answers would be small size and scratchability, respectively. Apple's **second-generation iPod nano** goes even thinner than its predecessor, yet eliminates virtually all of the light scratching risk by switching from glossy materials to an anodized aluminum enclosure. The new nano's not bulletproof, but it's closer than before. Best of all, it's cheaper - sort of - and comes in quite a few colors.

You'll still pay \$149 for the lowest-end, silver-colored nano, but you'll find 2GB of flash memory (read: storage without moving parts) inside, rather than the 1GB \$149 model released in early 2006. You'll also get 24 hours of runtime to the prior model's 15, and a 40% brighter screen. Cough up \$50 more and you'll double the capacity to 4GB and have four more color choices (red, pink, blue, and green); the \$249 8GB nano is only sold in red or black.

So what does the nano do? It's virtually equivalent to Apple's first color iPod (aka iPod photo) in every way save storage capacity. You can play - and for the first time in a nano, record - audio, accessing your music library with the same new search and scrolling features found in the full-sized iPod. The small nano plays all the same audio formats as the big one. It also performs photo slideshows, and offers four limited built-in games. All that's missing is video playback, downloadable games, and a few small frills, made up for by its exclusive compatibility with the Nike + iPod Sport Kit (see sidebar).

Is nano worth your cash? Apple's most recent revisions have made it a worthy, complete alternative to the full-sized iPod unless you're looking for video or games. While it's not the best value for the dollar on capacity, nano's raw convenience and run time make it a wicked companion wherever you are.

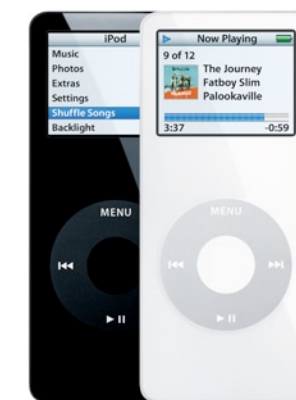
Search, Scroll and Run



In addition to adding support for gapless audio playback - a way to hear albums without pauses between tracks - the new nano includes two features taken from the full-sized iPod: a dial-by-letters search engine, and an aid for speed-scrolling that places a bezeled letter on screen to let you know quickly where you are within the alphabet. Both features work well, but aren't earth-shaking or unique. The nano's support for the \$29 Nike + iPod Sport Kit is more substantial. The sensor fits into certain Nike shoes and lets only a nano wirelessly receive and record running or walking data as music and voice feedback are playing.



From Aluminum to Plastic and Back.



iPod mini proved that tiny, metal-clad music players could fetch big premiums. Then came iPod nano, which was even smaller, but more expensive, and more scratchable. Thankfully, Apple went back to its original formula, debuting a new metal nano with five familiar colors, then adding an all-new one.

Back when Apple introduced the first cell phone-sized iPod mini (above, left) in January, 2004, critics - including us - found the colors ingenious, but the \$249 price to be \$50 too high for a 4GB music player. Apple disagreed, suggesting that 4GB was just the right size for the average person's music library, and the price, lower at the time than any other iPod, would still win plenty of attention.

The company was right. Within weeks, it was facing such profound shortages in the United States that it couldn't offer mini for overseas sale until late July, 2004, and could hardly meet holiday 2004 demand. Of its initial slate of five aluminum body colors, only gold proved unpopular; silver became the unisex color of choice, while pink and green models were snapped up by women, blue by men. And despite critics' suggestions that a price drop to \$199 would be imminent, Apple could afford to take its time.

Until February 2005. Many iPod mini wannabes had emerged; competitors had secured the miniature hard disks, and were starting to offer them at comparable prices, plus in different capacities. Apple's response was less than radical: a year after mini's introduction, it released a second-generation version, dropping the 4GB model's price


to \$199, adding a 6GB model at \$249, more than doubling their original battery life, and tweaking their colors. Gold disappeared, while blue, green, and pink became brighter than before. The new models were hits: when Apple cancelled them in September, 2005, it disclosed that the minis had been the best sellers in the iPod family's 20-million-plus run, thanks to athletes, females and younger customers.

It was surprising, then, to see Apple take certain steps back in introducing the original iPod nano, releasing the slimmer-than-mini iPod only in white and black colors, and at 2GB (\$199) and 4GB (\$249) capacities priced similarly to the original iPod mini, rather than its second-generation successor. Rumors swirled for its one-year lifespan that Apple was planning red or other colored versions, but were never borne out; Apple opted only to released a lower-priced, lower-capacity 1GB version for \$149.


In last year's Buyers' Guide, we openly hoped that the mini's metal-clad body would make its way back to the family. Now, with the September 2006 second-generation nano, it has, along with better prices and colors, finally including the red, Global AIDS Fund-helping October 2006 (PRODUCT) RED Special Edition nano (prior page, left).

iPod shuffle: Tiny 1GB Audiobox.

Shrinking the shuffle



Apple could have taken the iPod shuffle in two directions: smaller, or the scrap heap. As with other iPods, it went smaller: the shuffle went from 3.3" (H) by 1.0" (W) by 0.3" (D) and 0.78 ounces to 1.07" (H) by 1.62 (W) by 0.41" (D) and 0.55 ounces, with its only dimensional gains and retained weight due to its new metal body and integrated clip. Gone are 2005's integrated USB plug, shuffled over to a packed-in white plastic USB cable and dock, and the old fabric lanyard. Adios.





Price: \$79 Rating: B+

Simplicity, now smaller. With a body inspired by the iPod Radio Remote, the new shuffle lost its USB plug but won the designation “smallest MP3 player.”

If there's any product that has worn the iPod name less than comfortably, it's the **iPod shuffle**, Apple's first model to lack a hard drive, now in its second generation without a screen. Like the iPod mini, many people didn't understand the logic behind shuffle when it was introduced in January 2005, but the super-simple, super-cheap iPod has sold very well: over 10 million of the 60+ million iPods out there are shuffles.

Today's iPod shuffle is designed to do only one thing: play music no matter where you are. Like the iPod Radio Remote, it wants to be worn: there's a metal clip permanently fixed to its back, though it's small enough to be pocketed like a matchbox, a big contrast with the cigarette pack-sized full iPod. And it's not ready to connect to a computer unless you're carrying the included dock (left) around, unlike the USB plug-laden, flash drive-like design of its predecessor.

Rather than keeping the shuffle as an all-plastic, cheap-looking stick, the new design uses silver aluminum with only three white plastic accents: its top and bottom surfaces, and the four-button ring of its volume, track, and play/pause Control Pad. As with the nano, we were thrilled to see the shuffle gain metal and go smaller than before. But there were compromises: there's no room for a bigger battery - it's still rated for 12 hours, delivering over 17 - plus it's fallen in sound quality, and includes Apple's older, less impressive earphones.

Despite their low prices and simple designs, we've never been enthusiastic about the value of iPod shuffles, and the latest one is now many steps behind other iPods in everything from audio and interface features to photos, video, and accessories. Some people will love its size and simplicity, but with such great, small nanos out there, we consider it second best.

iTunes Phones: Disconnected.



Prices: \$349 Ratings: B-, C+

Three strikes, Motorola's out. From the ROKR E1 to the SLVR L7 and RAZR V3i, Motorola's iTunes phone line sank, proving that only Apple can create iPods.


It seemed like a match made in heaven. Motorola, producer of white hot RAZR mobile phones, was pairing with Apple, creator of equally buzzworthy iPod music players, to create phones with iPod features. How could they possibly fail?

There were three answers, starting with **Motorola's ROKR E1** (iLounge rating: C+), which sold in the United States for \$349 unless you locked yourself in to a one- or two-year Cingular contract. Released in September, 2005, ROKR (pronounced "rocker," above right) was a retrofit Motorola E398 candybar phone, re-released in a silverish package featuring an iTunes button and a sluggish piece of iPod-like music software called the iTunes Client. With a joystick controller and no way to use iTunes songs as ringtones, the 512MB ROKR had none of Apple's flair and lots of limitations - some worse than a \$99 iPod shuffle (see sidebar). It debuted to mostly bad press, and was reportedly one of Motorola's most oft-retuned models.

SLVR L7 (iLounge rating: B-) and **RAZR V3i** (iLounge rating: B-) didn't improve on ROKR's iPod-related flaws. SLVR (pronounced "sliver," above left) was the same candybar-style phone, only thinner, a bit sexier, and lacking two of ROKR's least useful features (a second integrated speaker and a keypad light show). By comparison, the RAZR V3i used a flip-open casing based heavily on the previously popular RAZR V3, but the addition of ROKR-style iTunes compatibility and a blurry 1.3-Megapixel camera did little to improve its appeal. RAZR V3i arrived late and quietly in the United States, again without fixing the iPod issues.

We're not surprised that there haven't been any rumblings about additional Motorola-developed iTunes Phones, but the concept isn't a bad idea: one day, developed by the right company, it will work well. Sony's Walkman phones are a good start, but our guess is that only Apple itself will create a worthy iPod phone. But when? And how much will it cost? Stay tuned.

What Went Wrong?



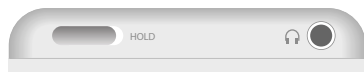
Were Motorola's iTunes Phones dead on arrival? For reasons unknown, but attributed to Apple, the ROKR shipped with a 100-song cap in the United States, and some European versions were capped at only 25-50 songs, regardless of how much free space the phone had to store music. Apple eventually allowed all iTunes Phones to store up to 100 songs, but file transfers to the phones remained painfully slow at USB 1.1 speeds. These worse-than-iPod shuffle limitations, combined with each phone's clunky, Click Wheel-less version of the iPod's ever-smoother interface, made using iTunes Phones several steps less enjoyable than their lower-priced iPod brethren, which had their own batteries and superior sound quality.

Today's iPod Family, Compared.

Top

While the big iPod has a Hold switch (to stop accidental button presses) and a headphone port up top, the iPod nano has only the Hold switch, and the iPod shuffle only the headphone port.

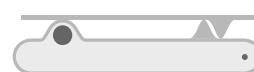
iPod (with Video)



iPod nano



iPod shuffle

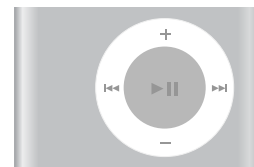
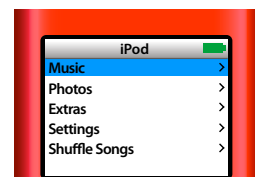
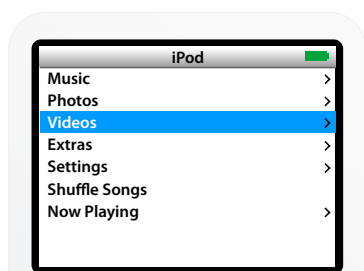


Dual-Purpose Port

Unlike other iPods, shuffle's headphone port is also used for recharging and data transfers - with the included Dock.

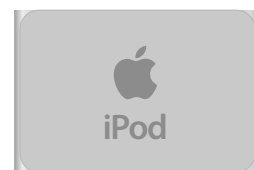
Screen

The full-sized iPod has a 2.5-inch, 320x240 pixel, 65,536-color white-lit display, and nano has a 1.5-inch, 176x132 pixel white/blue-lit screen. Both can show photos and album art, but only the big iPod's now brightness-adjustable display can play videos, and downloadable games. The nano can't.



Control Pad and More

Simplified controls include five buttons on front for volume up and down, track forward and backward, and play/pause., plus two bottom-mounted metal switches: one to turn power on and off, the other to change the play mode from shuffle to repeating in order.



Body

iPod shuffle has a silver aluminum body with a white plastic top and bottom, each with a pinhole-sized status light. A clip on back attaches to your clothes.

Dock

You'll need to carry the packed-in Dock if you want to recharge the shuffle's battery or change the songs it's carrying. The Dock has a built-in USB cable that connects to your computer for both purposes; as with full-sized iPods, an iPod USB Power Adapter is sold separately if you want to recharge from any wall outlet. Note that shuffle goes into the Dock upside-down.

Body

iPods come with one of three scratchable, glossy plastic front faces: white with a matte gray wheel, black with a black wheel, or black with a red wheel (U2), each with a mirror-polished metal back. iPod nano is mostly aluminum, in silver, black, blue, green, red, or pink.

Bottom

Power chargers, speakers, and other accessories connect to this bottom port, identical on both iPods with screens. iPod nano also has a headphone port on bottom.

Which iPod's Right For Me? Though all three iPod models are appealing, full-sized iPods win on value and features, photo-ready nanos are great compromises, and the shuffle offers the smallest entry price and size.

Skip the numbers, make it really easy for me to decide!

iPod shuffles are good starter or second iPods.

Designed to play your top songs, either in an order you specify or at random, they're super-easy to carry but weak at finding songs quickly. You'll want another iPod if you get one - the nano's a smarter buy.

iPod nanos compromise wisely on size and features.

Easy on-screen access to a music library is the key to a great iPod; nano's long battery life and small size help, too. At \$199, the 4GB model has enough space for the average person's music library, while the 8GB model offers space to grow.

The iPod with video is a top pick on all but physical size.

Skip the U2 model unless you really love its body - at \$249, the standard 30GB iPod is a great deal for serious music lovers, and plays games and video, too. The 80GB version has even more space and battery life with only a little extra thickness.

Summary: If you just need a tiny way to hear music, and don't care about the earbuds or audio quality, pick shuffle. The nano's a better value, with more space and a nice screen. iPod with video has the best features and value, yet is largest.

| | iPod shuffle 1GB | iPod nano 2GB | iPod nano 4GB | iPod nano 8GB | iPod 5G U2 Special Edition 30GB | iPod 5G 30GB | iPod 5G 80GB |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Number of Songs | 240 | 500 | 1000 | 2000 | 7500 | 20000 | |
| Hours of Music Battery Life | 12-17 | 24 | | | 14 | 20 | |
| Size & Weight | 1.07" x 1.62" x 0.41" 0.55 oz. | 3.5" x 1.6" x 0.26" 1.41 oz. | | | 4.1" x 2.4" x 0.43", 4.8oz. | 4.1" x 2.4" x 0.55", 5.5oz. | |
| Screen | None | 176x132 pixels, Color 1.5" | | | 320x240 pixels, Color 2.5" | | |
| Body Colors & Materials | 1 - Silver Aluminum & Plastic | 6 - Silver, Red, Blue, Green, Pink or Black Aluminum | | | 1 -Black/Red Plastic/Metal | 2 - White or Black Plastic/Metal | |
| Key Pack-Ins | Dock, Old Earbuds | None | | | U2 Video/Case | Fabric Case | |
| Plays Music | Yes | Yes | | | Yes | | |
| Stores Data | Yes | Yes | | | Yes | | |
| Displays Photos | No | Yes - 5 hours with music | | | Yes - 4 hours | | Yes - 6 h. |
| Plays Videos | No | No | | | Yes - 3.5 hours | | Yes - 6.5 h. |
| Plays Games | No | Yes - Built-In Titles | | | Yes - Built-In + Downloadable | | |
| Uses iPod Accessories | No | Yes - iPod Dock Connector | | | Yes - iPod Dock Connector | | |
| Price | US\$79 | US\$149 | US\$199 | US\$249 | US\$279 | US\$249 | US\$349 |
| iLounge Rating | B+ | A- | | | B+ | A- | |

Our Editors' Favorite iPods:

Dennis Lloyd, Publisher: "My favorite's the black enhanced fifth-generation model - I've downloaded lots of TV shows for travel. And the new nano's much sexier than before - the metal casing is the way it should have been last year."

Jeremy Horwitz, Editor-in-Chief: "Last year's nano was too scratchable and a little overpriced, but this year's black 8GB model is fantastic, as is the black 80GB iPod, my personal favorite."

Larry Angell, Senior Editor: "Apple's made the iPod nano even better; my old black one was just replaced with an even sexier second-generation model. That said, the new iPod shuffle is simply spectacular, and will probably see more use."

Bob Levens, Chief Forum Administrator: "A black 5G 60GB is my 'everyday iPod' because of the larger display; my old 4G is now in my car, and a 4GB nano plays weekly recorded radio shows. The shuffle? Now where did I leave that?"

Jerrod Hofferth, Contributing Editor: "My 60GB 5G iPod sees nearly endless use as a comprehensive car jukebox, but I'm still attached to my original nano because of its portability."

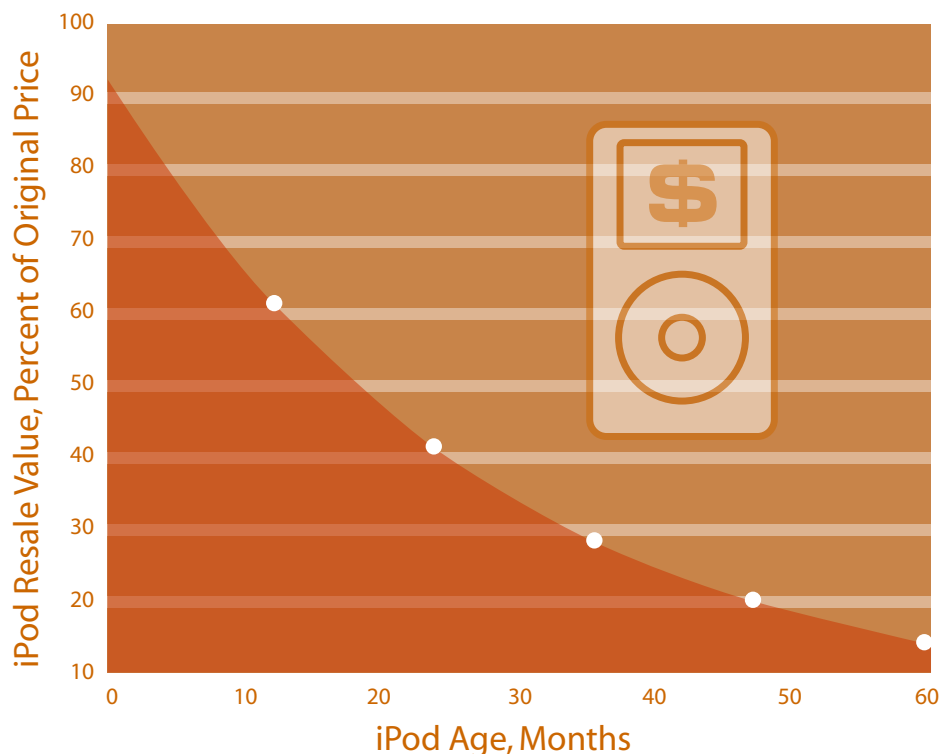
How Much is Your Used iPod Worth?

For the past three years, we've been tracking iPod online auction prices. Now we can help you guesstimate how much your iPod will be worth at various points in its lifetime - give or take a little.

Understanding the Curve and Timeline

The graph to the right is based upon three years of eBay selling prices for every iPod model, distilled into one simple curve - an averaging process that shows how prices decline over time. Below, the curve is turned into a simple table so you can quickly estimate a used iPod's likely value months and years after its first release date.

There's one key thing to underscore: the curve is only an average. Bigger (\$299+) iPods actually tend to hold value better over time, and can be 10% or more above the percentages below; smaller iPods (\$149 or less) can fall up to 15% below the curve. So our "Brand New" base price numbers suggest that you should expect value to be greater than (>) or less than (<) the curve's average. Other factors, such as losing pack-ins or your box, or scratching, engraving, or changing your iPod, can also affect pricing.



| Brand New | 3 Months | 6 Months | 12 Months | 18 Months | 2 Years | 3 Years | 4 Years |
|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|---------|---------|---------|
| 100% | 83% | 76% | 62% | 51% | 42% | 28% | 20% |
| \$349 | >\$290 | >\$265 | >\$216 | >\$178 | >\$147 | > \$98 | > \$70 |
| \$249 | \$207 | \$189 | \$154 | \$127 | \$105 | \$70 | \$50 |
| \$149 | <\$124 | <\$113 | < \$92 | < \$76 | < \$63 | < \$42 | < \$30 |

Used iPods via eBay Auctions

Here are the average prices that individuals (not businesses) fetched in eBay auctions for working iPods with only trivial included accessories, as of late October 2006.

Capacity Model Number Average Price

iPod 1G - Mechanical Scroll Wheel

| | | |
|------|-----------------------|---------|
| 5GB | M8513LL/A, M8541LL/A, | |
| | M8697LL/A | \$70.36 |
| 10GB | M8709LL/A | \$56.32 |

iPod 2G - Touch Sensitive Scroll Wheel

| | | |
|------|----------------------|---------|
| 10GB | M8737LL/A, M8740LL/A | \$66.84 |
| 20GB | M8738LL/A, M8741LL/A | \$71.00 |

iPod 3G - Dock Connector / 4 Touch Buttons

| | | |
|-----------------|-----------|----------|
| 10GB | M8976LL/A | \$70.55 |
| 15GB (Apr 2003) | M8946LL/A | \$76.50 |
| 15GB (Jan 2004) | M9460LL/A | \$73.57 |
| 20GB | M9244LL/A | \$87.00 |
| 30GB | M8948LL/A | \$104.13 |
| 40GB | M9245LL/A | \$130.67 |

iPod 4G - Click Wheel & 2005 Color-Screened

| | | |
|-----------------|-----------|----------|
| 20GB | M9282LL/A | \$116.73 |
| 20GB U2 | M9787LL/A | \$145.00 |
| 40GB | M9268LL/A | \$138.64 |
| 20GB (Color) | MA079LL/A | \$132.50 |
| 20GB U2 (Color) | MA127LL/A | \$171.25 |
| 60GB (Color) | M9830LL/A | \$161.90 |

iPod photo - Early Color-Screened iPods

| | | |
|-----------------|-----------|----------|
| 30GB | M9829LL/A | \$124.52 |
| 40GB | M9585LL/A | \$146.17 |
| 60GB (Oct 2004) | M9586LL/A | \$179.53 |
| 60GB (Feb 2005) | M9830LL/A | \$166.98 |

The Summary: Since last we updated this list, the trend in iPod prices can be summed up simply: down, sharply. Thanks in part to recent price drops and capacity bumps, prices have dropped from 15-30% since only June 2006, and now all 2001-2003 models are selling for \$104 or less. The new metal iPod nano has helped iPod mini prices crash down, a major change from last year; similarly, we think that color screens and video are antiquating past iPods, a trend likely to continue in 2007. First-gen iPods no longer seem collectible - for now.

Capacity Model Number Average Price

iPod 5G - Video (original)

| | | |
|-------------|-----------|----------|
| 30GB, white | MA002LL/A | \$189.26 |
| 30GB, black | MA146LL/A | \$184.00 |
| 30GB U2 | MA452LL/A | \$212.00 |
| 60GB, white | MA003LL/A | \$254.12 |
| 60GB, black | MA147LL/A | \$261.03 |

iPod nano (first-generation)

| | | |
|------------|-----------|----------|
| 1GB, black | MA352LL/A | \$84.57 |
| 1GB, white | MA350LL/A | \$82.84 |
| 2GB, black | MA099LL/A | \$100.10 |
| 2GB, white | MA004LL/A | \$100.03 |
| 4GB, black | MA107LL/A | \$142.57 |
| 4GB, white | MA005LL/A | \$145.18 |

iPod shuffle (first-generation)

| | | |
|-------|-----------|---------|
| 512MB | M9724LL/A | \$37.94 |
| 1GB | M9725LL/A | \$58.76 |

iPod mini (first-generation)

| | | |
|-------------|-----------|---------|
| 4GB, silver | M9160LL/A | \$64.60 |
| 4GB, blue | M9436LL/A | \$89.24 |
| 4GB, pink | M9435LL/A | \$86.79 |
| 4GB, green | M9434LL/A | \$75.67 |
| 4GB, gold | M9437LL/A | \$77.71 |

These models were released too recently to accurately track. We'll update them next time.

Capacity Model Number Average Price

iPod mini (second-generation, Capacity on Back)

| | | |
|-------------|-----------|----------|
| 4GB, silver | M9800LL/A | \$90.88 |
| 4GB, blue | M9802LL/A | \$92.56 |
| 4GB, pink | M9804LL/A | \$91.02 |
| 4GB, green | M9806LL/A | \$85.20 |
| 6GB, silver | M9801LL/A | \$114.01 |
| 6GB, blue | M9803LL/A | \$118.92 |
| 6GB, pink | M9805LL/A | \$119.12 |
| 6GB, green | M9807LL/A | \$115.99 |

iPod 5G - Video (enhanced)

| | | |
|-------------|-----------|-----|
| 30GB, white | MA444LL/A | N/A |
| 30GB, black | MA446LL/A | N/A |
| 30GB U2 | MA664LL/A | N/A |
| 80GB, white | MA448LL/A | N/A |
| 80GB, black | MA450LL/A | N/A |

iPod nano (second-generation)

| | | |
|-----------------|-----------|-----|
| 2GB, silver | MA477LL/A | N/A |
| 4GB, silver | MA426LL/A | N/A |
| 4GB, blue | MA428LL/A | N/A |
| 4GB, pink | MA489LL/A | N/A |
| 4GB, green | MA487LL/A | N/A |
| 4GB, red (PRSE) | MA725LL/A | N/A |
| 8GB, black | MA497LL/A | N/A |
| 8GB, red (PRSE) | MA899LL/A | N/A |

iPod shuffle (second-generation)

| | | |
|-----|-----------|-----|
| 1GB | MA564LL/A | N/A |
|-----|-----------|-----|

The iPod Family

2007 iPod Buyers' Guide

Amazon.com's Marketplace used to be a great place to buy and sell used iPods, but it's no longer thriving. Here are prices we've most recently seen asked by iPod sellers.

| | | | |
|-----------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------|
| 512MB shuffle | \$65-66 | | |
| 1GB shuffle | \$75 | 1GB nano (Black) | \$135 |
| 20GB 4G (B&W) | \$150-160 | 1GB nano (White) | \$105-125 |
| 30GB 5G (White) | \$215-290 | 2GB nano (Black) | \$125-138 |
| 30GB 5G (Black) | \$259-350 | 4GB nano (Black) | \$169-176 |
| 60GB 5G (Black) | \$310-349 | 4GB mini (Silver) | \$138-180 |

Amazon.com



iPod Trade-ins

We've also provided some trade-in prices so that you can get a sense of how much you'll get towards the purchase of a newer model by disposing of an old iPod. **PodSwap.com** both buys and trades used iPods. The company has provided this list of its trade-in prices for "excellent" condition iPods:

| | | | |
|------------------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|
| iPod 1G, 5GB | \$41 | iPod mini 2G,4GB | \$74 |
| iPod 1G, 10GB | \$44 | iPod mini 2G, 6GB | \$87 |
| iPod 2G, 10GB | \$47 | iPod nano 1G, 1GB | \$57 |
| iPod 2G, 20GB | \$53 | iPod nano 1G, 2GB | \$67 |
| iPod 3G, 15GB | \$57 | iPod nano 1G, 4GB | \$83 |
| iPod 3G, 20GB | \$63 | iPod shuffle, 1GB | \$29 |
| iPod 3G, 30GB | \$68 | iPod shuffle, 0.5GB | \$18 |
| iPod 3G, 40GB | \$74 | iPod 5G, 30GB (1st Gen) | \$146.00 |
| iPod 4G B/W, 20GB | \$69 | iPod 5G, 30GB (2nd Gen) | \$169.00 |
| iPod 4G U2 B/W | \$77 | iPod 5G, 30GB U2 (1st Gen) | \$157.00 |
| iPod 4G B/W, 40GB | \$90 | iPod 5G, 30GB U2 (2nd Gen) | \$187.00 |
| iPod Color 4G, 20GB | \$93 | iPod 5G, 60Gb (1st Gen) | \$214.00 |
| iPod U2 Color 4G, 20GB | \$102 | iPod 5G, 80GB (2nd Gen) | \$240.00 |
| iPod Color 4G, 30GB | \$97 | iPod nano, 2GB (2nd Gen) | \$72.00 |
| iPod Color 4G, 40GB | \$104 | iPod nano, 4GB (2nd Gen) | \$105.00 |
| iPod Color 4G, 60GB | \$123 | iPod nano, 8GB (2nd Gen) | \$132.00 |
| iPod mini 1G,4GB | \$64 | iPod shuffle 1GB (2nd Gen) | \$36.00 |

Remember, you'll need to buy something to qualify for these "trade-in" prices, a factor that might make options such as eBay more appealing, though less convenient and easy.

Small Dog Electronics (smalldog.com) offers these prices for working iPods, with a mere \$25 credit for a non-working salvage unit. The store no longer lists prices for most of the iPods it purchased last year, and has dropped prices by around \$50 per model for units that were around back then.



| | |
|-----------------|-------|
| 20GB iPod photo | \$60 |
| 30GB iPod photo | \$70 |
| 40GB iPod photo | \$85 |
| 60GB iPod photo | \$115 |
| 30GB iPod 5G | \$115 |
| 60GB iPod 5G | \$135 |
| 2GB iPod nano | \$40 |
| 4GB iPod nano | \$65 |

Should I Sell? Should I Keep? Advice from iLounge Editors

The choice whether to sell your old iPod to buy a new one will depend mostly on one factor: your budget. If you have the cash, consider keeping the outdated iPod around to use for a specific purpose: a dedicated in-car jukebox - at least, in climates with stable temperatures - or as an easy way to back up your computer files, especially with an old iPod shuffle.

What do we do? The answers vary from editor to editor. Some of us now horde iPods as eventual collectibles, but most of us sell old ones to finance the purchase of new ones every year or so. Many of our 4G iPods went out the door when the 5G iPod came out, and iPod minis have been shelved in favor of newer iPod nanos.

The choice of whether to sell or trade-in is now more of a toss-up than before: you can do about as well at a good swap shop as you could by selling your iPod at auction. That said, if your iPod stands out in some way at auction - cleanliness, few scratches (think Radtech's Ice Creme), or included accessories - it might fetch way more than the curve's average price.



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iH5



iH31

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small in size and big in sound, all iHome systems reinvent your iPod experience. compact yet sleek, powerful yet astonishingly clear, each iHome system features the crystalline sound of Reson8™ Speakers, a charging dock fit for all docking iPods (including nano), and an individualized design to suit your life-sound-style, at home or on the go.

iH5. clock radio companion with Wake to iPod/Sleep to iPod functionality. moonlights as clever home stereo. **iH31.** grab-n-go boombox. perfect for beach blasting or picnics in the park. sound good? visit ihomeaudio.com for more info.

Available at:
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iLounge's Ten Rules for iPod Buyers.

Our readers always ask us whether now's the right time to buy a new iPod. After years of watching Apple and buying its products, we've developed this ten-step guide to help you choose wisely.

- 1 Expect Constant Improvement.** Apple tries to keep its products at or ahead of each industry's trends. Based on the pace of the consumer electronics industry, iPod updates can be expected annually.
- 2 Expect Frequent Storage and Casing Changes.** Apple rarely changes an iPod's case design faster than 1 year after release. By contrast, internal changes, such as storage capacity, can come every four to six months - most likely six, sometimes sooner, sometimes later, depending on industry trends. These changes are most commonly seen as price reductions or storage bumps, varying from \$30 to \$100 in value.
- 3 Expect Quiet Changes.** During any major feature/storage bump, Apple frequently changes other iPod components, sometimes quietly, sometimes not. Generally, these component changes are designed to make the products look a little better, which Apple may or may not publicize, exhibit fewer failures, which Apple will almost never publicize, or will play down. Occasionally, a change will actually result in slightly degraded quality, which Apple will never disclose. The ratio of "good" changes to "bad" changes typically skews heavily in favor of good ones.
- 4 Don't Expect More than 5 Major Options.** Apple tends not to expand its major product lines past 5 options at a time, and will often kill one product to make room for a new one. Today, the iPod lineup has 4 products: shuffle, nano, iPod, and U2 iPod. Each product is designed to come in 2 or 3 primary versions (Gigs of storage), but sometimes comes in only one.
- 5 Expect Staggered Launches.** Apple almost never updates an entire product line at once. Instead, it staggers new launches at different times throughout the year, making it possible that a new model could arrive at any time, on short notice. This isn't done to confuse consumers - it's done to keep competitors on their toes.
- 6 Discount Rumors, Particularly on Timing.** Apple almost always refuses to discuss future products, generating intense public speculation as to "what's next." To feed this demand, a number of web sites and analysts offer claimed "insider" information (rumors) about new products, but they are sometimes partially or totally inaccurate, and always occupy potential customers' minds with products they cannot buy. Apple rarely moves as fast as people expect.
- 7 Beware of First-Generation Models.** Despite the surge of orders Apple has right after every launch, its products routinely suffer from "revision A," "first-generation," or "early adopter" bugs. Part of this is due to cutting-edge technologies and designs; another part is due to the secrecy-obsessed, quiet pre-release testing it employs. Can't deal? Stay away.
- 8 Remember, Used iPods Have Value.** If you're on the fence about a purchase because you really, really believe the rumors that something new is coming, you could always buy something now, and then re-sell it when the new product's release is announced.
- 9 Big Changes (Typically) Come in Six-Plus Month Cycles.** Be realistic: there will always be something newer and better on the market 6 or 12 months after you make any consumer electronics purchase. Apple has never apologized for continuing to update its products, and as the separate September and October 2005 nano and 5G iPod launches showed, the company can kill iPods at any moment. But Apple typically introduces a product and keeps it around for six or more months at a similar price.
- 10 Be comfortable.** Any purchase you make should be one that makes you happy, so ask yourself whether the features you're getting in today's purchase are enough for your needs. If they are, buy it, enjoy, and don't sweat what's next. Otherwise, wait.

Music can transcend.
It's what feeds the soul, spirit.
Keep it safe always.

Respect your music. Protect your iPod®

Within a dynamic balance of purpose and design lives Power Support – a full range of iPod protection gear that includes our pioneering Crystal Film set. Visit powersupportusa.com to discover our complete line of products. Exclusively for iLounge enthusiasts, use code [ilounge06](#) at checkout for a 10% discount.



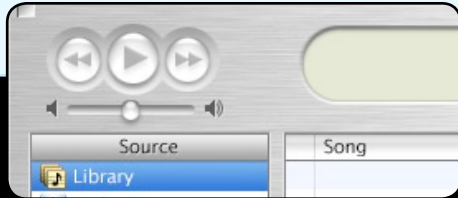
POWER SUPPORT

Between the harmonies there is balance.
For more information, please visit: www.powersupportusa.com

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iPod history 2001

January 9: After buying rights to an existing program called SoundJam MP from Casady & Greene, Apple introduces iTunes 1.0 for the Mac, a program that converts audio CDs into compressed digital audio files, organizes digital music libraries, and plays Internet radio.

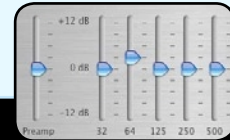


Fathers of the iPod

Several Apple employees are credited with the iPod's design: the company's Jon Rubinstein (top left) helped pick the key technologies, while Tony Fadell (bottom left) guided the hardware development specifics, and Jonathan Ive (top right) and his team designed the enclosure. As always, CEO Steve Jobs was involved in the entire process, inspiring his team to create something brilliant - at the end, the company had no idea just how successful iPod would become.

(photos credit Apple)

November 2: iTunes 2.0 is released for the Mac, adding iPod support, ID3 and metadata support, MP3 CD burning, and sound control features such as an equalizer and crossfading.



2007 iPod Buyers' Guide

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July 17: iTunes 3.0 is released for the Mac, adding support for Audible audio books, ratings, smart playlists and playlist import/export. To provide software for its new PC-ready iPods, released this day, Apple includes MusicMatch, another company's program, which is adequate but not fantastic.



October: Having previously released CD player-sized Nomad MP3 players, Creative releases the smaller Nomad Zen Jukebox as a competitor to the iPod. With a so-so screen and a footprint that fits uncomfortably in a large pocket, the Zen is still the company's strongest design to date. At this point, few have realized the importance of Apple's decision to use a super-small 1.8" hard disk, a bright white display, and easy controls in the iPod.



Five Year Dynasty: iPod + iTunes.

Back in 2001, Apple dreamt up an "iMate" as a cool music and data device for Mac users.

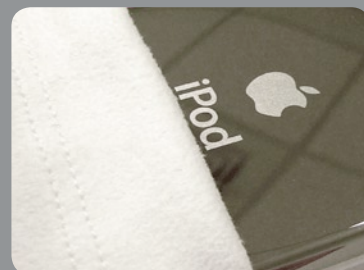
But once PC users got their hands on iPods, tens of millions of people began to appreciate the company's genius for industrial design and user experience, transforming Apple into a leading brand and media vendor.



October 23: After months of quiet toiling, Apple announces the first iPod at a price of \$399. Unlike most (but not all) competing digital audio players available at the time, Apple relies on a hard disk

for storage instead of flash memory or interchangeable CD-ROMs, and uniquely focuses on promoting the small size, power, and ease of use of its device. The first iPod has a 5 Gigabyte storage capacity - enough for over 1,000 songs - and works only on Macs, using iTunes to convert and organize music. Did Apple release iTunes with the iPod in mind? According to an official Apple time line, development of the iPod began only six months before its release. On November 10, the first iPod shipped.

December 31: By the end of 2001, Apple has sold a meager total of 125,000 iPods. Consumed by terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, Americans are paying little attention to luxury goods.



What was the "iPod?"

As author Leander Kahney points out, Apple originally trademarked the iPod name for planned but never-released public Internet kiosks containing stripped-down Apple computers. It later came back to the name.



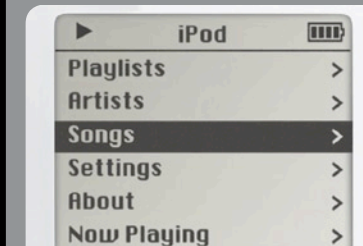
March 20: Apple announces a 10 Gigabyte (2,000 song) update to the iPod for \$499. New iPods ship with the ability to display business card-like contact information, and some begin to wonder about future PDA-like expansion of the iPod's abilities. At this time, the iPod is still a Mac-only product, but programs that let iPods work with PCs begin to trickle out.



July 17: For the first time, separate PC-compatible iPods are unveiled: some models include a new touch-sensitive Scroll Wheel instead of an actual moving wheel, which was easier to damage. And as a \$499 20GB iPod debuts, old iPod prices drop - 5GB to \$299, 10GB to \$399. However, all the new iPods still connect only to FireWire ports, which are far less common on PCs.

October: By this point, large retailers Best Buy, Dell, and Target have all started to sell iPods - a key to increasing sales. Dell's web site eventually offers amazingly deep discounts.

December: Apple unveils its first and only limited edition iPods, featuring the engraved signatures or logos of Madonna, Tony Hawk, Beck, or No Doubt for an additional \$49. At a total price of \$548, these limited edition iPods were for some time the most expensive ever sold by Apple.



All About the Music?

Music was obviously key to the creation of the iPod: Apple's early interface focused almost exclusively on ways to let you quickly find the music stored on the low-capacity hard disks. Today's full-sized iPods divide your attention between Music, Photos, Videos, and Extras.

iPod history 2003

March: Microsoft announces development of Media2Go, a new hardware and software standard that combines video and audio playback in one portable device. Originally targeted for a holiday 2003 release, the devices are eventually renamed Portable Media Centers (PMCs), and delayed until late 2004. Microsoft hints that PMCs are the company's "iPod killer."

April 28: iTunes 4.0 is released for the Mac, adding the AAC audio codec, support for DVD burners, networked music library sharing, and album artwork. Apple also launches the iTunes Music Store with 99 cent per track (\$9.99 per album) pricing and a library of 200,000 songs. Unfortunately, neither iTunes nor the music store is available for PC users, who are becoming a larger part of Apple's iPod business.

May 5: One week after opening the iTunes Music Store, Apple has sold 1,000,000 songs.



October 16: Apple releases both iTunes 4.1 and the iTunes Music Store (iTMS) for U.S.-based PC users, phasing out support for the less popular MusicMatch PC software in the process. Total iTMS sales are now at 13,000,000 songs.

Apr. 28, 03 iPod 3G, iTunes 4, and iTMS introduced

June 19-23, 03 USB 2.0 for iPod & 1M iPods sold

Oct. 16, 03 iTunes 4.1 for PC debuts

May 5, 03 iTMS hits 1M songs sold

Sep. 8, 03 iPod 3G 20GB & 40GB debut

April 28:

Huge news: Apple unveils the "third-generation" iPod. The new iPods are even thinner and smaller than before, feature a bottom Dock Connector port rather than a top-mounted FireWire port, and have entirely touch sensitive controls. The new iPods have higher capacities than 2G iPods offered for the same prices: now 10GB (2,000 songs) is \$299, 15GB (3,700 songs) is \$399 and 30GB (7,500 songs) is \$499. All the new iPods now work on either Macs or PCs. Between May 1-4, the new iPods begin to sell in stores. Apple will never be the same.



June 19: Apple finally releases USB 2.0-compatible cables and drivers for 3G iPods, expanding the range of iPod-friendly PCs. On the 23rd, the company sells its one millionth iPod, more than a year and a half after releasing the device, and online retailers see solid demand.

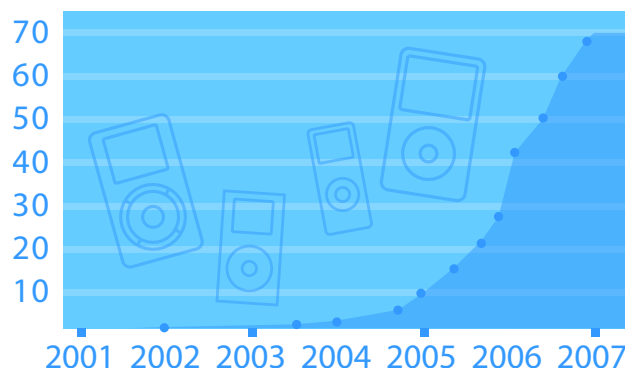
September 8: Apple refreshes the middle and top of the 3G iPod line with higher storage capacities at familiar pricing. A 20GB (5,000 song) model replaces the 15GB version at \$399, and a 40GB (10,000 song) model replaces the 30GB version for \$499. Sales continue to be brisk - by past standards.

October 16: Belkin and Apple jointly announce voice recording and digital photo storage peripherals for the iPod, expanding the device's capabilities past music playback.

Sales of the iPod, 2001-2006

There were several turning points in iPod sales: the 2003 release of the third-generation iPod - the first iPod that could work with PCs or Macs out of the same box - was critical, as was Apple's June 2003 release of USB cables for that iPod. PC users fueled the iPod's dramatic growth

Two years ago, the iPod had sold under 6 million units, and last year, the number was at 28 million. Today, Apple says that 69 million iPods have been sold, with quarterly shipments now exceeding 8 million units, and once reaching as high as 14 million over a single three-month period. The company expects 2007 to be even stronger, with introductions of new products that consumers have been waiting for.



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January 8: At the Las Vegas Consumer Electronics Show, PC heavyweight Hewlett-Packard unexpectedly announces that it will license the iPod from Apple. It promises to release and sell a "HP blue"-colored iPod by Summer, and says that it will pre-install iTunes on its PCs and tout it to its customers almost immediately.

April 8: iTunes 4.5 is released. Having reached out to some PC users in version 4.2 by letting AOL accounts download iTunes Music Store songs, Apple continues its push by adding automatic Windows Media Audio (unprotected WMA) file conversion to iPod-compatible format. It also adds the high-definition Apple Lossless compression format.

June 15: After releasing iTunes 4.6 with AirTunes to provide AirPort Express wireless access to iTunes music, Apple opens the iTunes Music Store in three European countries: France, Germany, and the United Kingdom. U.K. media complains that Apple doesn't have enough local indie music in the catalog. But one week later, 800,000 songs have been sold to European customers, 450,000 in the UK alone.

July 11: The iTunes Music Store sells its 100,000,000th downloaded song, the first legal music download service to hit that milestone. A prize package worth \$13,200 is awarded to the downloader of the song. Ten days later, Apple adds three top European indie labels to the iTMS catalog.

July 26: Motorola announces that its next generation of cell phones will be iTunes-compatible.

July 26: RealNetworks releases Harmony, enabling songs sold by Real to be played back on iPods without Apple's permission. Apple soon blasts Real and implicitly threatens a suit.

Jan. 6, 04 iPod mini debuts

Apr. 8, 04 iTunes 4.5 released

June 15, 04 iTMS France, Germany and UK launch

Jan. 8, 04 HP iPod announced

May 5, 04 3M iPods sold

July 11-17, 04 iTMS = 100m, iPod 4G debuts



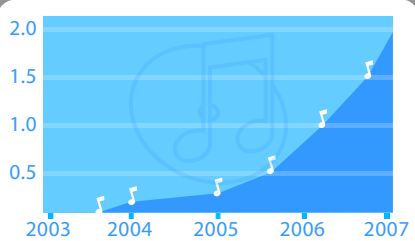
January 6: Apple debuts the iPod mini, a smaller 4GB version of the iPod available in five metallic colors at \$249. Despite an impressive simplifying redesign of the iPod's control scheme and casing, critical opinion of the device is initially mixed because of price and capacity concerns. Apple simultaneously replaces the \$299 10GB entry-level iPod with a 15GB model, and retailers almost immediately discount the discontinued 10GB model to \$249, further clouding the value equation.

February 17-20: Apple ships its first iPod minis, and long lines form at stores for its official Friday on-sale date. Sell-outs and near-sell-outs are reported nationwide, and critical opinion quickly turns in the device's favor.

March 25: Apple pushes back the international release of the iPod mini from April to July, citing "much stronger than expected demand" from U.S. customers. Analysts report shortages of the miniature hard drives required by Apple. It will take until July 24 for Apple to actually ship minis worldwide.

iTunes Sales, 2003-2006

When Apple introduced \$0.99 music downloads, albums were overpriced and piracy was rampant. After a slow start, sales surged, reaching 1 billion songs sold in under three years, and 1.5 billion only eight months later. No competitor is close.



July 17-20: Leaked before Apple's official announcement, the fourth-generation iPod debuts online on the 17th. Boasting improved battery life (12 hours), iPod mini-style Click Wheel controls and thinner bodies, the 4G iPods generate considerable buzz and ship by the 20th. Called lower-cost iPods, prices for the new low-end (20GB, \$299) and mid-range (40GB, \$399) units look good until consumers discover that numerous pack-ins (Docks, remote controls, and cases) have been stripped from the new iPods' packages.

iPod history 2004



September 7 - October 4: In the week after the quiet launch of the first Portable Media Center (PMC) device, Microsoft begins an anti-iPod public relations offensive. In an interview, Chairman Bill Gates says that the iPod would have been “easy” for Microsoft to make. Later, at a time when Internet-based viruses plague Windows PCs, the company says that a new Windows OS will prevent iPods from unleashing viruses on PCs, though no such iPod attack was reported. Finally, CEO Steve Ballmer publicly calls iPod users music thieves, claiming that his products offer better copy protection. He later apologizes.

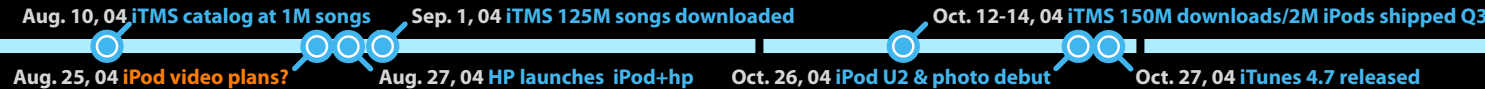
November 11: Retreating for the first time from releasing proprietary ATRAC-format music devices, Sony announces a MP3-ready Walkman. By year’s end, Sony and Warner executives are publicly discussing plans to take away the iPod’s lead in digital music.

August 10: The iTunes Music Store catalog hits 1,000,000 songs.

September 1: iTunes hits 125 million downloaded songs. Apple starts to market its new iMac G5 computer as “from the creators of iPod,” rather than the other way around.

October 12-14: iTunes downloads hit 150,000,000, a rate of 4 million downloads per week.

October 27: Apple releases iTunes 4.7, adding the ability to transfer photos to the iPod Photo, as well as the ability to easily screen out one’s duplicate tracks and delete them.

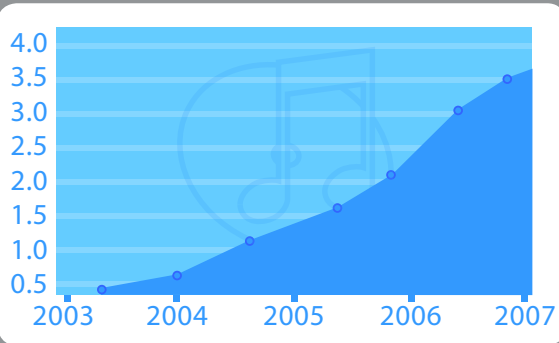


August 25: Apple quietly begins to search for wireless and video experts to join its iPod division.

October 12-14: Analysts report that iPods represent 82% of all digital music player sales and 92% of all hard-drive based players; nearest hard drive competitor Creative has 3.7%. Over 2,000,000 iPods were shipped by Apple in the prior 3 months alone.



August 27: Hewlett-Packard announces the “Apple iPod from HP” (or “iPod+hp”), a repackaged version of the 4G iPod with new manuals and HP-supplied technical support. Promising availability by September 15, HP begins to ship units almost immediately, and announces an iPod-compatible printer and “printable tattoos” to cover iPods.



Growth of the iTunes Catalog, 2003-2006

It came from humble beginnings: in April 2003, the iTunes Music Store launched with a 200,000-song library, featuring exclusive tracks from “over 20” artists. As of the end of 2006, the Store boasts a library of 3.5 million songs, and more exclusives than anyone has bothered to count.

Interestingly, the entire catalog isn’t available to users in all countries, and the gulf has only widened from 2005 to 2006: movies and TV shows (not included in this graph) are not yet available outside the U.S.

2007 iPod Buyers’ Guide

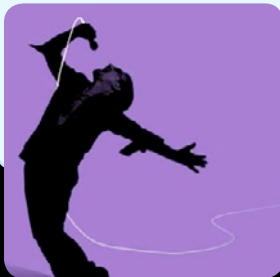


October 26: At a special event at the California Theatre in San Jose, Apple debuts a color-screened version of its recent 4G iPod called iPod Photo (\$499-\$599), available as premium 40GB and 60GB models for the holidays. It also launches the iPod U2 Special Edition (\$349), a black-bodied version of the black-and-white screened 4G iPod, with the engraved signatures of the four members of the rock band U2. Six million iPods have been sold to date.

One day later, the iPod Photo debuts in stores, and on November 16, the U2 iPod appears in stores.

2007 iPod Buyers’ Guide

January 25: U2’s Silhouette ad is named smartest ad campaign by Business 2.0. By month’s end, Apple is named the top global brand in a survey of 2,000 ad professionals.



April 19: According to reports, wireless providers Verizon and Sprint balk at carrying the upcoming Motorola iTunes phone.

May 12: With his Portable Media Centers failing to generate consumer interest, Microsoft’s Gates again rips the iPod, saying that its success won’t last.



January 11: Apple introduces iPod shuffle, the smallest iPod yet developed, at \$99 (512MB) and \$149 (1GB) price points. Lacking a screen but possessing ultra-simple controls, the shuffle allows only one playlist or randomized playback of a fraction of one’s music library, and doubles as a USB storage drive. Apple adds Autofill to iTunes 4.7.1, a one-button way to fill and re-fill the shuffle with new music every time it’s connected to a computer. By February, Apple controls 43% of the flash player market, and by May, 58%.

February 23: Only four months after releasing the 40GB iPod photo, Apple discontinues both it and the black and white 40GB iPod. The company then introduces the 30GB iPod photo (\$349) and drops 60GB model’s price (\$449). It also introduces a \$29 Camera Connector so that photo transfers to the iPod can be achieved without iTunes synchronization.



Apple iPod shuffle+hp 1GB

Apple iPod mini+hp 6GB

May 2: Having rolled out its version of the iPod photo on April 12 - six months after Apple - HP reportedly plans to sell the iPod mini and iPod shuffle, as well. The delays are surprising, given the companies’ public relationship.



June 2: Blatant knock-offs of the iPod shuffle and mini appear at Computex trade show in Taiwan. On the same day, Apple agrees to settle a class-action lawsuit brought by iPod owners over battery defects, and will replace batteries or provide cash or credit, by model.

June 28: Announcing a “merger” of its iPod and iPod photo lines, Apple discontinues the last of its black-and-white full-sized iPods, replacing them with cheaper color iPods at \$299 (20GB) and \$399 (60GB) prices. The company also drops the price of the 1GB iPod shuffle to \$129.

2005 iPod history



Front Row: Apple’s 10-Foot OS

Introduced in October, 2005 and subsequently included with all of Apple’s consumer-level Macintosh computers, Front Row enables iTunes users to access their music, photos, digital videos and DVDs through an ultra-simple on-screen interface, blending icons and a clean, iPod-like text interface. Designed to work with Apple Remote controls, Front Row lets you enjoy media from ten feet away from the Mac - the company’s first step towards the on-TV interface more recently shown for its iTV home media router.

June 28: iTunes 4.9 adds free downloads of radio-like audio “podcasts” to the iTunes Music Store, plus iPod-ready playback.

July 6: Three weeks after England’s Queen Elizabeth II purchased an iPod mini for herself, President Bush receives a 4G iPod as a birthday gift from his daughters, and has aides load it with music for his workouts.

iPod history 2005

August 9: Apple fails in an attempt to secure a patent on the iPod interface. Initially, Microsoft is blamed, but by month's end, Creative Labs is discovered to have won a related patent covering a key aspect of digital music navigation. Creative immediately suggests that it will enforce the patent against companies such as Apple; others believe it won't stand.

August 27: The New York Times reports that Sony and Warner want Apple to raise iTunes prices, and that Sony is making CDs incompatible with iTunes. In September, Apple fires back, refusing and calling the labels "greedy."

September 7: Apple releases iTunes 5. Staff reviews of music are added, along with a streamlined look, easier search features, and preferences menu changes.

Apple states that 600 million iTunes songs have been sold, an average of 60 songs for each of 10 million iTunes accounts. As of this date, over 2 million songs can be downloaded, the largest catalog of any digital music store online.



October 12: Apple releases iTunes 6. Five TV shows and 2,000 music video downloads are debuted for sale, along with \$1.99 pricing for each download. Videos are sold at 320x240 pixels, and formatted for the iPod's display, rather than high-res viewing on a computer or TV; by month's end, 1 million videos have been sold. Gifting, auto-recommendations, and reader reviews are added as features. In a roundup of September 2005 sales, Nielsen Soundscan estimates iTunes controls 84% of the market for legal digital music downloads.

Sep. 7, 05 iPod mini is discontinued, iPod nano introduced & iTunes 5 released

Oct. 12, 05 iPod 5G (video) introduced, iTunes 6 released

Dec. 7, 05 30 Million videos sold

Dec. 1, 05 22.5 Million iPods sold

July 29: Having recently replaced the CEO who signed the landmark deal with Apple, HP ends iPod sales, claiming that repackaging iPods wasn't a good fit with its future business plans. By end of this month, iPod is estimated by NPD to have 74% total market share in MP3 players.

September 7: At a Special Event in San Francisco, Apple abruptly discontinues its "most popular iPod", the mini, and replaces it with the smaller iPod nano (2GB/\$199, 4GB/\$249), in both black and white color options. The company also announces a special edition engraved Harry Potter iPod, and Motorola's first iTunes phone, ROKR E1.



Evolving the iPod's Advertising

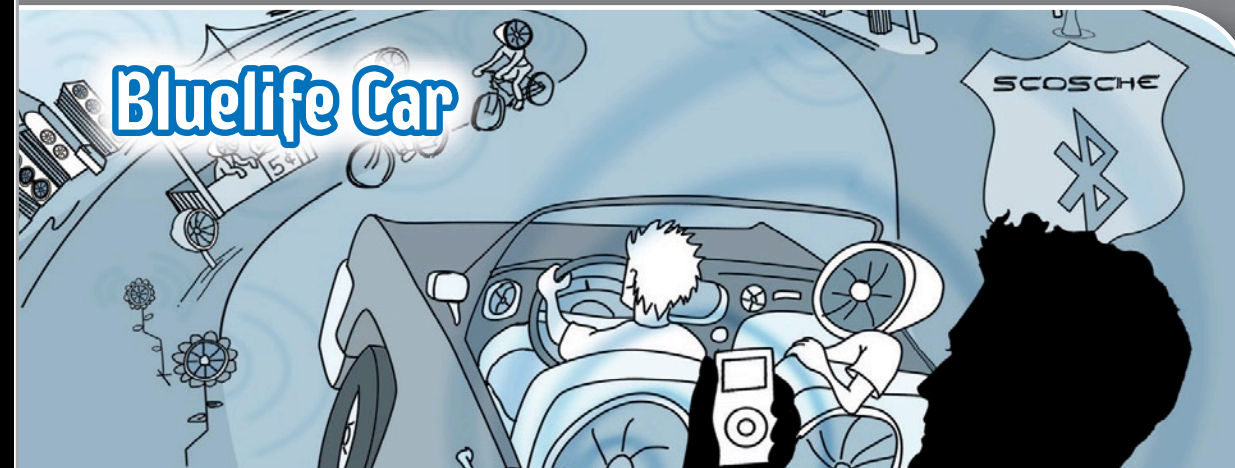


Striking the right balance with iPod advertising campaigns has proved a challenge for Apple: on one hand, the company's silhouette commercials and posters have won awards and become ubiquitous, but the theme became predictable some time ago. Rather than toss aside the silhouettes as coldly as it discarded the iPod mini, Apple has kept the world's most anonymous dancers employed, advancing its technologies to add splashes of color and detail to its backgrounds, and most recently blanking the backgrounds in favor of more detailed, colorful iPods and people. Similarly, it's continued to infuse the commercials with energetic music: not just the rock of U2 or rap of last year's Eminem, but more recently the jazz trumpet of Wynton Marsalis and the now rockabilly sensibilities of Bob Dylan. Is the iPod maturing? Apple's trying to expand its appeal, but losing the cool, young cachet it's built could be deadly.

Oct. 12: With users threatening lawsuits over the scratchability of iPod nanos, Apple gathers media for a "One More Thing" Special Event, and debuts the fifth-generation iPod with video (30GB/\$299, 60GB/\$399). Billed as an iPod "with video as a bonus," the new iPod features a 2.5", 320 x 240 screen and enough battery life to play videos for between 2 or 3 hours, depending on which model you purchase. It is the first full-sized iPod not to include a FireWire cable or power supply, omissions from the earlier nano and mini. Like iPod nano, it is introduced in both white and black versions for the same price, and uses an interface highly similar to the iPod photo released a year earlier. It appears in stores a week after the event, with a simple protective case inside the box; iPod nanos are packed with smaller but otherwise identical cases shortly thereafter.

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Bluelife Car



Bluelife Home



Bluelife Sport



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2007 iPod Buyers' Guide

December 7: Apple discloses that 3 million videos have been sold since the October addition of video content to the iTunes Music Store, and that 100 million songs have been sold in Europe. By mid-month, additional partners such as NBC are adding shows to the Store, with prices ranging from \$1.99 to \$9.99 as a test, including The Office.

December 8: Creative announces a nearly identical clone of the iPod with video, dubbed Zen Vision: M, suggesting that its Zen patent proves its innovation, and will be enforced.

December 13: Microsoft and MTV pre-announce URGE, a music download service that promises to combine Microsoft's technology with MTV's marketing and music acumen. It actually launches six months later, by which time MTV's TV shows are in iTunes.

2005-2006 iPod history

February 22: Following a countdown with prizes, the iTunes Music Store sells its 1 billionth song, providing lucky winner Alex Ostrovsky with a 20" iMac, 10 60GB iPods, a \$10,000 iTunes Music Store credit, and his name on a four-year, one-student scholarship (for someone else) to Juilliard School of Music.

1,000,000,000

To every iTunes Music Store customer, thanks a billion.
1 billion songs have been legally downloaded from the iTunes Music Store.

March 8-14: Apple introduces Multi-Pass and Season Pass, which let iTunes Music Store users get multiple episodes of a show (or sports events) for a single low price, by paying in advance.

Jan. 10, 06 iPod Radio Remote debuts

Feb. 22, 06 iTMS sells 1 billion songs

Feb. 7, 06 1GB nano debuts



January 10: Rather than announcing new iPods at the annual Macworld Expo in San Francisco, Apple unveils the \$49 iPod Radio Remote, which for the first time adds FM radio tuning to the 5G and nano, and notes that a record 14 million additional iPods were sold during the holiday quarter alone.

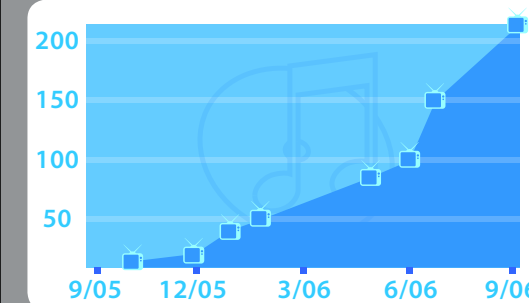
February: The press begins to realize that SanDisk has beaten Sony, Creative, and others, becoming the #2 U.S. MP3 player vendor.

February 7: By press release, Apple announces a 1GB version of the iPod nano for \$149, preserving the prices of its prior 2GB and 4GB models, but dropping the prices of 512MB (\$69) and 1GB (\$99) iPod shuffles.

December 1: Apple announces sales of 22.5 million iPods for the year, and an installed base totalling 30 million.

December 17: Apple says that it has sold out of 1GB iPod shuffles for the remainder of the holiday season, prompting many to wonder whether Apple plans a January replacement. But none is released for 10 months, and old shuffles continue to sell.

Growth of the iTunes TV Show Catalog, 2005-2006



Desperate Housewives) especially popular, and has since seen the collection grow to over 220 different shows in only a year's time. Multiple episodes are available for each show, and there are 75 full movies, now, too.

If the humble beginnings of the iTunes Music Store's song catalog weren't surprising enough, the Store's TV collection is even more amazing: Apple launched with only 5 shows, only two of them (Lost and

February 28: At a "fun new products" Apple Event that was the subject of more speculation than most, Apple unveils the iPod Hi-Fi, a \$349 "audiophile" speaker system, and \$99 leather cases for the iPod and iPod nano. For the first time in years, the products are subjected to massive public ridicule before and after release, with many users shocked by the prices and skeptical of the accessories' value.

iPod history 2006

March 13: In apparent response to the growing success of the iTunes Music Store, French legislators announce and later pass a law designed to force companies such as Apple to let digital music downloads play on competing devices. Though the law is gutted by time of passage, rumbles persist that Apple may pull the Store out of France in response.

March 14: The first full-length movie - High School Musical - quietly appears in the iTunes Music Store at \$1.99, then switches to \$9.99.

April 28: On the Music Store's third birthday, 2.9 million songs, 60,000 podcasts, 9,000 videos, and 70 TV shows are available for download; several days later, Apple announces the number has reached 3 million, and that it has renewed its 99-cent pricing deal with the industry's major recording labels.

On TV tonight, on iTunes tomorrow

Though Apple's video sales have been nowhere near as popular as music sales, the company's concept for making videos available is nearly perfect: last night's TV show will be available via iTunes by the next day. Like a show? Get a multi- or season-pass, and let the episodes download automatically. But oddly, shows like Saturday Night Live are sold incomplete and at higher than normal prices. Why?



June 14: An iPod competitor named MusicGremlin is released, touting wireless music downloading ability without a PC, and \$15 subscription-based access to a 2-million song catalog. Rumors of a wireless iPod pick up steam.

June 6, 06 iPod U2 updated to 30GB

May 23, 06 Nike+iPod Sport Kit announced



March 16: Apple debuts a new silhouette-less ad campaign for the iPod nano, showing a city of album art funneling into nano's top.

April 19: Longtime Apple partner PortalPlayer, responsible for the reference design that evolved into the first iPod, is denied a place in unnamed, upcoming iPod mid-range and high-end flash-based players. The announcement throws the company's stock into chaos, and competitor Samsung announces it has won. Another story claims nVidia has won the right to create video and 3-D chips for next-generation video iPods.

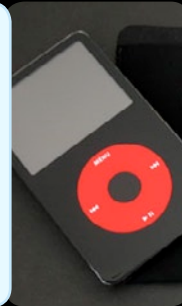
May 15: Creative officially sues Apple, claiming violation of its Zen patent. Apple files two countersuits alleging violation of its own patents.



May 23: Nike and Apple announce a collaboration to release new, iPod-ready athletic accessories under the Nike+ line, with a \$29 Nike+iPod Sport Kit, new shoes, and new apparel due within 60 days. Even given the announcement, the product launch on July 12 is surprising in scope, with new clothes, shoes, and the iPod add-on. The Sport Kit alone sells 450,000 units in under 90 days.



June 6: Apple quietly announces an updated version of the iPod U2 Special Edition, now at 30GB capacity for \$329. It comes with a special U2 video download coupon and red Wheel.



June 12: A British tabloid publishes an expose on working conditions at Chinese factories where iPods are manufactured by a contractor named Foxconn, claiming low pay and poor conditions. Apple investigates and finds some issues.

June 20: In an uncharacteristic break with Apple policies, the CEO of Foxconn tells shareholders that Apple is set to release a "none-touch" iPod, without elaborating. Is this a new video iPod? Rumors swirl.

2007 iPod Buyers' Guide

2007 iPod Buyers' Guide

July 11: Microsoft quietly shows off prototypes of another "iPod killer," named Zune, and begins to approach iPod add-on developers to create an accessory ecosystem like Apple's. Rumors spread that the company will also replace any iTunes-purchased music for free as an incentive to switch to the device. On the 21st, it confirms that it will release the semi-wireless Zune and a music service in 2006, later matching the 30GB iPod's pricing.



September 12: Touting 88% legal U.S. download market share and number 1 status in all 21 countries where it sells music, Apple releases iTunes 7, renaming the "iTunes Store," and launching with 75 Disney, Touchstone, Miramax and Pixar movies at prices ranging from \$9.99 to \$14.99, depending on release date, along with 220 TV shows. iTunes adds gapless playback, better video controls, and substantial interface tweaks like CoverFlow, a way to view your library as album and box art. The software is unusually buggy, but 125,000 movies are sold in the first week, and most bugs are fixed by the 27th.

September 22: Wal-Mart allegedly threatens to cut orders from studios who sell low-priced movies via iTunes; Target follows suit in October. Apple is said to be working out a deal.

September 26: Major League Baseball pulls its podcast from iTunes, citing a lack of Apple promotion.

Sept. 12, 06 Apple announces updated iPod 5G, new iPod nano 2G, new iPod shuffle 2G & iTunes 7

Oct. 13, 06 PRODUCT (RED) iPod nano released

Oct. 18, 05 39 million iPods sold in '06, 69M total

August 8: Ford, GM, and Mazda announce that their 2007 models will offer iPod-ready stereos, radically increasing iPod-in-car options. By year's end, over 70% of cars to be sold in the U.S. are claimed to be iPod-ready in some form or another.

August 4-22: iPod and iTunes competitors Dell and Napster falter, with Dell quietly withdrawing from the digital music player market, and Napster publicly mulling a sale.

August 23: Apple and Creative settle their suits; Creative becomes an iPod add-on maker and receives \$100 million from Apple, which tersely accepts the Zen patent, but will recoup some money if Creative licenses the patent to others.

September 5: SanDisk announces the Made for Sansa accessory program, in conjunction with a handful of iPod accessory developers.

September 12: At an event called "It's Showtime," Apple simultaneously announces (a) enhanced fifth-generation iPods with brighter screens, better prices and capacities (30GB/\$249, 80GB/\$349); (b) second-generation iPod nanos with five colored aluminum casings, brighter screens, and better prices/capacities (2GB/\$149, 4GB/\$199, 8GB/\$249); and (c) one brand-new, radically smaller, metal-bodied iPod shuffle at a single capacity (\$1GB/\$79). The company also offers an advance look at iTV, a device that wirelessly spools iTunes content to a TV.

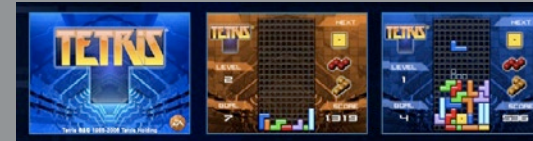


October 13: The PRODUCT (RED) iPod nano is released, with \$10 of every red, \$199 4GB nano purchase going to fight AIDS in Africa, and \$25 iTunes Gift Cards coming in November.

October 18: With 39 million iPods sold in fiscal year 2006, Apple's total iPod sales stand at around 69 million. Significantly more iPods were sold in the last year than in the four previous years combined. And the holiday season hasn't even started yet...

Better videos, games hit iTunes

As part of its September "It's Showtime" event, Apple not only added movies to the iTunes Store, but increased their resolution to 640x480 from 320x240 - a bump of four times the detail, and nearly DVD quality. Along with several software developers, Apple also debuted iPod Games, a series of nine titles that could be played on any 5G iPod. Game pricing is set at \$4.99 per title.



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2007 iPod Buyers' Guide

iPod history

2001



2003



2002



2004



2005



2006

The Evolution of iPod Boxes & Pack-Ins.

Apple's first iPods were impressively designed, packaged and accessorized. Since then, the designs have gotten better, but their packages and pack-ins have become decidedly more spartan.

Cubes have been a recurring theme in products released by Apple CEO Steve Jobs: during his time away from Apple, he developed the cube-shaped NeXT computer, then released the PowerMac G4 Cube, then packaged every iPod inside an amazing cube-shaped box - one you opened, compartment by compartment, to reveal manuals, accessories, and the iPod itself. Starting in 2001, this lasted until 2005, at which point every iPod was in a rectangular box - iPod mini and shuffle went first, followed by the nano and fifth-generation iPod. Most recently, Apple has switched to fully transparent, even smaller boxes for new nanos and iPod shuffle, which reduces their weights, and thereby the fossil fuel consumption required for shipping.

Pack-ins for iPods have also changed - a lot. Until 2006, every iPod included earbuds, manuals, and software; the original and 2G Mac iPods also included a FireWire cable and an AC adapter, but the PC version also included a 4-pin to 6-pin FireWire adapter. Deluxe 10GB and 20GB Versions also included an iPod Remote and iPod Carrying Case.

Then the 3G iPod arrived. The 10GB package included slightly new earbuds, an AC adapter, a FireWire cable, a 4-pin to 6-pin adapter, and Dock Connector covers. More expensive 15GB and 30GB packages included a Dock, Remote, and Carrying Case.

Apple's first iPod mini was the first to include USB and FireWire cables; it also included a plastic Belt Clip and AC adapter. But the 2G mini dropped the adapter and FireWire cable - USB charging became mandatory. The real cutting began with the 4G iPod: Remotes and cases disappeared, with a Dock only in the more expensive \$399 model. Later iPod photos (\$499-599) included 3G-like pack-ins, plus a new AV cable and Photo Dock, but Apple later dropped them and cut prices. Original iPod nanos and 5G iPods came with USB cables, no adapters, and no docks, while iPod shuffle included a necklace, earbuds, and iTunes, nothing more. Today's iPods have even less: iTunes has been dropped from their packages, but they all have USB cables and earbuds; the 5G gets a simple case, and the new iPod shuffle's USB cable doubles as a miniature dock.

ILOUNGE

2006

BEST

AWARDS

**You've seen our 2,000-accessory database.
But you don't want to read all the entries.**

Your answer: the 2006 Best of the Year Awards, with quick looks at over 40 different iPod add-on categories, and only top picks in each one.

In last year's guide, we picked as many as nine different options for each of ten different categories, but this year, we've made it easier: except for cases, we've stuck to our five or so top picks per genre, but expanded our categories to make it simple for you to find the exact type of accessory you need.

Each mini-review includes three key details. First, you'll see the current suggested retail price for the add-on, and the letter rating we assigned it at the time of its review on iLounge.com. Besides looking up the full reviews, which we encourage you to do, we've also included an official company web site address where you can find more information (including ordering details) for each product. If you want to learn how we rated products, take a look at the details in our Report Card, and of course, the full versions of our reviews are found in our comprehensive accessory database, at ilounge.com/index.php/accessories.

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PROTECTION WITH STYLE IPOD 5G (VIDEO) CASES

2007 iPod Buyers' Guide

As the only glossy member left in the iPod lineup, the 5G seriously needs protection.

If you're about to buy a video-ready iPod, good news: every case developed for last year's 5G iPod still works on the new Enhanced 5G models - 30GB iPods work in old 30GB cases, and 80GB iPods work in old 60GB cases, without any modifications. We've covered many great options over the past year - here are our top picks.

iSkin eVo3 / eVo3 Limited Special Edition

When it comes to colorful rubber protection, iSkin's standard eVo3 case (\$35, A-) is tops at a price - a thick, molded visor of hard clear plastic on top of an almost fully protective silicone rubber holder in one of six colors. The "eVo twin" eVo3 Limited Special Edition (\$40, B+) has a two-colored (black and red) silicone body and a tinted black visor. Both cases come with a fully detachable belt clip, and protect literally all of the 30GB or 60GB iPod inside. But the LSE's visor color earned the B+ by being too dark for proper video viewing, and both cases are expensive by rubber case standards. For best-of-breed design, however, the less expensive standard case is worth it - in a year of increasingly boring silicone case designs, iSkin continued to innovate in protection and features.

PRICE: \$35+ RATING: A-/B+
WWW.ISKIN.COM

ILOUNGE
2 0 0 6
B E S T
IPOD CASE



Did you know? Perfect protection for a fifth-generation iPod involves exposing nothing to possible scratches except the headphone port, and using thick material.

Agent18 VideoShield Kit

Clear plastic cases for the iPod have become predictable and a bit boring, but Agent18's VideoShield is a major exception. The case is designed to be compatible with every bottom mounting iPod accessory, and though it sacrifices some bottom protection in the process, Agent18 includes a Universal Dock Adapter that lets the case fit in any Universal Dock-compatible accessory. There are also a detachable, multi-angle video stand and a hard core metal belt clip in the package, both amongst the most impressive that we've seen. A version with an armband but no stand is sold for nanos.

PRICE: \$35 RATING: A-
WWW.AGENT18.COM



Marware Sportsuit Convertible

Marware's standard Sportsuit Basic cases are nice, but its Convertible versions for iPod (B+) and nano (A-) are truly sports-ready, equipped with detachable armbands, superior belt clips, and hard front shields. We liked their clear plastic, full face covers, and loved their unique Orca-skin neoprene, a silky material that makes the cases feel unlike any other company's. Most interesting are the flip-open bottoms, which expose as much or as little of each iPod as you prefer, including enough access for the Nike + iPod Sport Kit. Though the newer 2G nano-ready version is better than the full-sized iPod case in a few particulars, both are top workout options.

PRICE: \$30-35 RATING: A-/B+
WWW.MARWARE.COM



Other Top 5G iPod Cases

See our past publications. We don't want to completely repeat ourselves - our Free iPod Books and last year's Holiday Buyers' Guide provide more options.

Consider top nano picks. Some of the best iPod 5G cases are also available in iPod nano versions - where possible, we showed the nano version instead.

Speck Products Skin-Tight

Over the last year, Speck has shown itself to be a true innovator in soft plastic case design, improving even its most basic case designs with better textures, colors, and features. The company's lowest-end Skin-Tight is one of the best examples, gaining great body grip dots and even better iPod coverage - all it lacks is a Click Wheel shield. There's still a super-smart bottom flap that opens when you need it, and you get three cases in one \$30 package. A great value, and a very nice case design.

PRICE: \$30/3 RATING: A-
WWW.SPECKPRODUCTS.COM



Core Cases Aluminum

There aren't many metal cases that impress us these days - they all look pretty much the same - but Core Cases' Aluminum Cases for 5G iPods are standouts. Like Core's earlier iPod shuffle and nano cases, these use six anodized aluminum colors (black, silver, orange, blue, green, or pink) to create largely protective, eye-catching designs, each with a detachable belt clip. While the metal will keep your iPod shielded against most common scratches, it will absorb and show them itself - thankfully the price is reasonable enough to excuse it.

PRICE: \$25 RATING: B+
WWW.CORECASES.COM

Aim for B+ rated cases or better. Our reviews can be sorted by grade - recommended options rate B or higher, but B+ and A- cases are top picks.

Cases for Kids

Durability counts. The cases here are all made from resilient hard plastic, silicone rubber, or something inbetween, and provide nearly complete iPod coverage.

Think flash. It might be hard to pick a case that's perfect for someone else's needs, but between these options, you'll find something hobby- or kid-specific.

Aim for \$30 or less on prices. You needn't spend more than \$30 on a good case - options above this price use materials that are better for older users.

ifrogz Tadpole

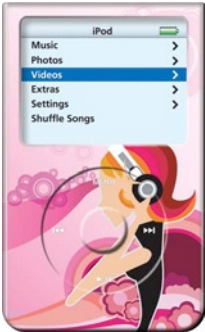
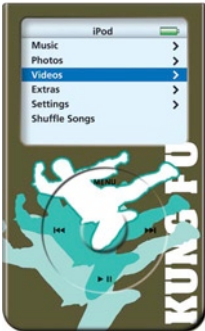
On originality alone, Tadpole from ifrogs scores big: made in currently popular kids' colors (orange or purple with accents in the other color), each case has two big, thick handles that turn an iPod into a handheld video player for younger children. Paired with earphones safely set up with the iPod's Volume Limit feature, Tadpole renders your 5G easier to hold, harder to break, and simple to use: a one-year-old figured out the controls within seconds of being shown how the iPod worked. A sticker-style screen and Click Wheel guard is included in each package.

PRICE: \$25 Rating: B+ www.ifrogz.com

Griffin Disko

Cases with integrated electronics are rare, a fact which makes Disko an instant standout: each one has two batteries inside to guarantee longevity for the 16 integrated lights, which come in three colors and flash in five different patterns. To activate the lights, just shake the case, which includes rear shells that fit 30GB or 60/80GB iPods. A nano version is also available.

PRICE: \$30 Rating: B www.griffintechnology.com



Aquarius iJacket

The good news: Aquarius' iJacket cases offer an incredible array of artistic, interesting designs to choose from - 48 at last count - and each case is protective of everything but the iPod's top and Dock Connector port. Made from a durable plastic, they include matching belt clips and sell for low prices. But you'll need to hunt a bit to find them - eBay is the easiest online merchant - and prices will vary from merchant to merchant. Expect to pay about \$16 including shipping.

PRICE: \$16 Rating: A- www.ijacket.net

ifrogz wrapz

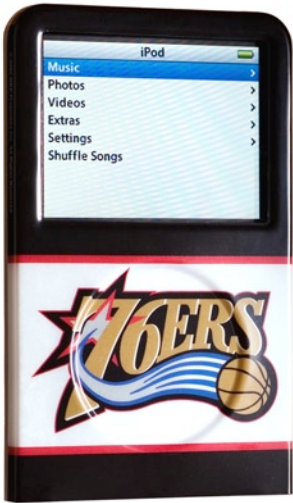
There are 34 colors of wrapz (the rubber body cases), 38 colors of bandz (the detachable accent stripes), and over 220 types of screenz (the Click Wheel stickers), making ifrogz' original silicone design one of the most customizable cases we've ever seen. Extra parts are easy to order, letting you change up each case as much or as little as you want. Like iSkin's eVo3, wrapz aren't cheap, but you get a very unique and highly protective case for the dollar every part of the iPod is covered.

PRICE: \$31 Rating: A- www.ifrogz.com

XtremeMac Iconz

With four MLB teams (Yankees, Cubs, Red Sox and White Sox), three NBA teams (76ers, Lakers, and Heat), five cartoon characters and Darth Vader, XtremeMac's licensed series of soft plastic iPod cases offer great options if you like their logos. More protective of the iPod's top than an iJacket but less protective of its bottom, the cases work in Apple's Universal Docks, less predictably in other docking accessories. Integrated screen and Click Wheel protection is much appreciated; frosted clear plastic backs let you see through to the iPod inside.

PRICE: \$30 Rating: B+ www.xtrememac.com



Boomwave Podstar Diablo

If you're tired of trotting out the old "you little devil" line and want to say it with an iPod case, it's hard to go wrong with Podstar Diablo. These red, white, or black cases feature as much or as little spooky art as you prefer on the front, with horns on the sides and a rubber tail on the back - screen protectors are also included, but Click Wheel ones aren't. Included trading cards (!), dog tags, and carabiner hooks are all bonuses.

PRICE: \$30 Rating: A- www.thepodstar.com

Other Great Options for Kids

Athletic cases. XtremeMac (SportWrap), Incase (Sport Armband), and Speck (Active Sport) make cool armbands and sport cases appropriate for all ages.

Stickers. Though we don't actively re-view stickers any more, you can find lots of simple adhesive covers for iPods in our massive accessories guide.

Clear cases. There are lots of these, including those on the first two pages of this section - avoid cases that force you to remove the iPod for control access.

Cases for Guys

Better Energy Systems
Tread Visor

Like Better Energy's earlier Treads, but better, this environmentally friendly case is made largely from recycled truck tires, but also has cool plastic and fabric accents that provide added protectiveness and features. Colored earbud slits on the back let you store Apple's earphones while not in use; a completely protective front, back, top and bottom design shields the iPod against any sort of harm. It's eco-smart, and reasonably priced, too.

Bigger and badder. Though few people like huge, thick cases, guys aren't quite as size-sensitive as girls, and sometimes like a little extra shock protection.



PRICE: \$35 Rating: A-
WWW.SOLIO.COM



Marware Sidewinder

It's the utility belt of the iPod 5G case world: the first case we've seen to include a pop-out headphone manager and a flip-open rear stand for video viewing. Available in white or black, the hard plastic shell also includes clear screen protection, a slide-off front top piece, and a snap-closed Dock Connector cover. All that's missing is Click Wheel coverage, and all size-obsessed users will complain about is the case's size, which isn't slim, but accomplishes an incredible amount.

PRICE: \$30 Rating: A-
WWW.MARWARE.COM

Tough or sleek? The options here lean more towards the tough and durable; if you're looking for sleek, consider InvisibleShield (in the nano section).

Miniot iWood 5g / Red

Carved from your choice of real woods, Miniot's iWood 5g series - most notably, Red - is so handsome in person that we think pictures don't fully do it justice. We generally don't get too excited over cases with flip-closed lids, but iWood adds a uniquely organic appeal to the polished plastic and metal iPods, letting it blend in to rooms with wooden desks, walls, or floors, or just standing out from the crowd of rubber, plastic, and metal options. The price is high, but so's the quality; impressive engraving will add additional costs and even more drool appeal.



PRICE: \$94+ Rating: B
WWW.MINIOT.COM

Think dark. Different guys have different color palettes, but pinks and other bright colors aren't as popular with men as they are with women. Go figure.

DC Shoes | Incase Folio

Incase releases lots of cases under the Folio name, but the black camouflage DC Shoes version is man tough and subtly designed. The outside and inside are modestly accented with camo spots, while the iPod holder inside has a cool integrated Click Wheel cover and clear screen protector. As with all Incase Foliros, this one has a flap that needs to be shut when carried, and a non-detachable belt clip.



PRICE: \$40 Rating: B+
WWW.GOINCASE.COM

Cases for Girls

Power Support Illusion Case

Virtually everyone's used the iPod's back as a mirror at some point - the Illusion Case amazingly creates a mirror on the iPod's front, as well. And when we say "amazing," we mean that it gets "ooohs" every time. When off, the iPod inside is essentially invisible save for its Click Wheel, but turned on, its screen glows through the mirrored surface. Power Support includes an extra clear faceplate in case you need to watch video on your iPod without dimming the screen, and a Crystal Film set of protective stickers that will keep the Click Wheel, front face and back face scratch-free.



PRICE: \$35 Rating: A-
POWERSUPPORTUSA.COM

Cash, flash, or both? Designers often charge higher prices for cases marketed to women - \$40 and up. But there are many great options at sub-\$40 prices, too.

Vaja iVod video SP

For years, Vaja's high-quality leather cases have been the very best iPod owners could choose from, and though the company now makes 5G cases from \$50 and up, the more expensive iVod video SP is our favorite. Included for the price are one of 40 color choices for the case body and another of 40 for the central racing stripe, plus the most supple padded leather you'll find in any iPod case. You'll also get great Click Wheel and screen protectors; engraving is extra.



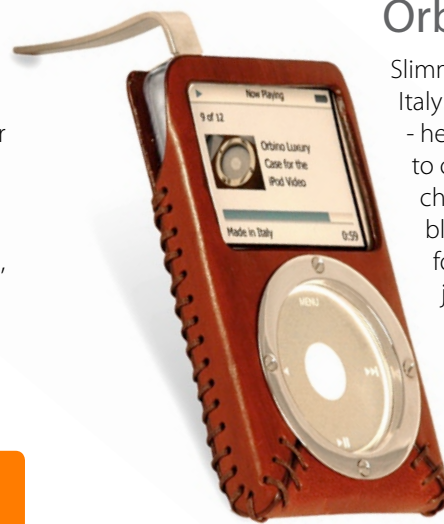
PRICE: \$90 Rating: B+
WWW.VAJACASES.COM

XtremeMac MicroFlip

Though it's hard to see from pictures, MicroFlip in person is one of the very nicest leather cases we've seen, especially in saddle-colored suede. Using a flip-closed design that smartly latches on a top-mounted peg, MicroFlip covers all of the iPod save its side corners, and only skimps a little on the interior plastic screen protector. It's worth every dollar if you like the flip-closed design.



PRICE: \$40 Rating: B+
WWW.XTREMEMAC.COM



Orbino Cambio

Slimmer than iVod but similarly protective, Orbino of Italy's Cambio case combines a precious metal ring - here, palladium - with classy hand-stitched leather to create a knockout, iPod-matching case. You can choose from four classic leather colors - black, brown, saddle or cognac - or pay extra for your choice of a different custom leather. A jewelry-class detachable belt clip is included, as is a non-adhesive plastic insert for screen and Click Wheel coverage.

PRICE: \$89 Rating: B
WWW.ORBINO.COM

SCRATCHPROOF YOUR METAL IPOD NANO 2G CASES

The aluminum iPod nano is tougher than before, but not impenetrable. Safety is below.



ShieldZone InvisibleShield

Though cases are still cool, iLounge's editors have recently shifted to using ShieldZone's InvisibleShields for iPods and nanos: Full Body Shields protect almost all of the nano's body, particularly the face and back, without obscuring or adding bulk to its natural looks and coloration. You'll gain about a millimeter of total thickness, which precludes use with some cases, but otherwise isn't an issue. Be aware: the Shields aren't truly invisible and don't fully cover the nano's top or bottom, but they're close enough for us to rely upon.

PRICE: \$20 RATING: A-
WWW.SHIELDZONE.COM



Marware Sportsuit Sleeve

When Marware introduced the Sportsuit Sleeve for the first iPod nano at \$20, we liked the case but thought it could stand to be less expensive. Marware's obliged, and at \$10, we consider this simple design to be ideally priced: an Orca-skin neoprene pocket on the front can hold your earbuds, while a flip-closed lid protects any nano inside. Blue and black versions are available.

PRICE: \$10 RATING: B+
WWW.MARWARE.COM



Noreve Tradition for nano G2

Flip-open cases come and go, but Noreve's Tradition series carries on. An improved update of the company's first-generation nano Tradition, the new version opens from the bottom, uses a simple magnetic sealing system, and protects most of the new nano's body without becoming cumbersome. High-quality, soft leather comes in nine different colors, each with a metal front accent and detachable rear belt clip and nub system.

PRICE: \$41 RATING: B+
WWW.NOREVE.COM

Every time Apple introduces a new iPod body style late in the year, it throws case makers into a frenzy: suddenly old cases aren't guaranteed to work. The second-generation iPod nano is no exception; cases made to its predecessor's precise tolerances will no longer fit. We've tested all the options below to make sure they'll work with the new nano; expect even more options, soon.

Did you know? Our favorite first-generation nano cases can be found in The Free iPod Book 2.2 and iLounge.com's Reviews section. Sort by grade for easy reference.

Power Support Kimono

Though it looks as if Power Support is readying new Kimonos specifically for the second-generation nano, its first-generation designs work flawlessly with the colored iPods. The red case (shown) is a beautiful match with the brand new iPod nano PRODUCT (RED) Special Edition, and Power Support's Kyoto, Japan-based partner Miyavix continues to churn out beautiful seasonal updates. There are few nano cases this classy, and we continue to like every edition, even if the prices necessarily reflect labor and material expense.



PRICE: \$35 RATING: B+
POWERSUPPORTUSA.COM

Carrie Scott Jamband

It's a simple accessory at a reasonable price: Carrie Scott's Jamband adds a protective iPod nano compartment to a black, washable terrycloth wristband, providing complete visual and tactile access to the nano while shielding its face from the elements. Nike + iPod Sport Kit-compatible, it's great for those who like wearing their nanos at forearm rather than bicep level.



PRICE: \$17 RATING: A-
WWW.WEARJAMBAND.COM



Speck Canvas Sport

When Speck unveiled the original version of the Converse All-Star-inspired Canvas Sport in mid-2006, we were impressed, but when it updated the cases for the new nanos, it made an already good design even better. Today's five Canvas Sport cases, matching the original five nano colors, have mostly canvas faces and white rubber accents, just like sneakers, plus slim integrated belt clips. They also thankfully come at a more reasonable \$30 price tag. Your nano's Wheel is left exposed, and the headphone port hole's a bit small, but we genuinely liked each one enough to use them.

PRICE: \$30 RATING: A-
SPECKPRODUCTS.COM



Macally Icesuit

It's extremely easy to make a generic rubber case for an iPod; Macally's Icesuit is the opposite, including twin-colored front accents, and a rear integrated earbud and cable manager. Though a slightly imperfect fit on the new nano, and more colors would be great, this is one of the best rubber designs out there.

PRICE: \$20 RATING: B+
WWW.MACALLY.COM

What Distinguishes iPod nano Cases?

Protectivess. It's surprising that many nano cases omit screen or Click Wheel protection, and sometimes expose sides or entire top/bottom surfaces to scratching.

Materials and style. Rare is the truly deluxe nano case material, but we've seen nice options in wood, leather, plastic, rubber, metal, and many different fabrics.

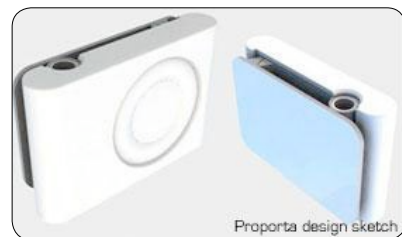
Durability. A number of cases - not the ones above - have been called out for poor stitching, easy tearing, or otherwise falling apart after only weeks of use.

RANDOMLY SELECTED FOR YOU IPOD SHUFFLE 2G CASES



Mophie Nueva Wraptor

The idea behind Wraptor (\$10) is to provide a combination clear hard plastic case with integrated cord management. Taking the shape of a simple front shield with a hole for the new shuffle's Control Pad, and contours that expose its switches and headphone port, Wraptor lets you wind the shuffle's cord around its edge. No back protection is included.



Proporta design sketch

Proporta Silicone Case

Rubber is perhaps the most inevitable early case material for any iPod, and Proporta is planning a 1/16" colored silicone protector for the new shuffle (\$20), with concept renders suggesting that it will cover part of the front face and leave the top, back, and bottom open.

Second-generation shuffle cases are too new to review; here's what we know is coming.

Since the second-generation iPod shuffle was released so close to press time, real cases (rather than artists' mock-ups) are few and far between, and we haven't yet had the opportunity to try any of them with the shuffle. Here are the options that have been pre-announced so far, without ratings, so you can have an idea of what will be out there over the next month or so.



iSoundCap Visor for iPod shuffle 2G

We've covered iSoundCap's hats in the Athletic Accessories section of this Guide - now the company is working on tennis visors (\$14-16) that will mount the clippable iPod on the right side of your head. So far, only white versions have been shown, but the company produces hats in three colors (white, black, and pink), so we'll see what happens with this one.

speck | Spirited Cases

Protect your iPod with

style



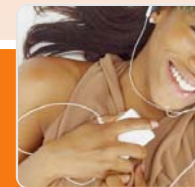
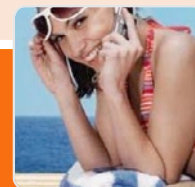
Canvas Sport



ToughSkin



ActiveSport



WWW.SPECKPRODUCTS.COM

CHUB CITY
I-PLAYAZ 2
INTERACTIVE ELECTRONICS

- Plays your favorite MP3 & CD Tunes
- Built in speaker
- Interactive lights & sound
- Mix your own jams with the beat and scratch buttons on Hype and Chub C.
- Volkswagen Beetle features spinning rims

MOVES AND JAMS TO THE BEAT!
WITH INTERACTIVE LIGHTS AND SOUNDS

Officially licensed by Volkswagen

PLAYS MP3 MUSIC
INCLUDES: SLAMMIN' MUSIC TRACK
MP3 PLAYER NOT INCLUDED

CHUB C. HYPE VOLKSWAGEN BEETLE

Jada TOYS

WWW.CHUBCITY.COM

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Did you know? Original iPod shuffle accessories were the family's least popular, leading most major companies to kill or never develop shuffle-specific add-ons.

PREVENT IPOD LOSS, MAYBE SECURITY ACCESSORIES

2007 iPod Buyers' Guide

Deter and possibly prevent iPod theft or data loss with these variously priced tools.

Secure-It The Pod Safe

Face facts: if someone wants to steal your iPod, and has the right tools, they can probably do it. But there are ways to deter and possibly even stop thieves, and Secure-It's The Pod Safe is currently the best of them: a black or white hard plastic iPod case with a medium-thickness steel cable and padlock. Versions for both full-sized iPods and nanos do their jobs well: opening via a hinge into two pieces, the bottom of the fourth-generation- and fifth-generation-compatible case is sealed with the lock, holding your iPod firmly inside; the single-shelled nano case seals at the top with an identical lock. Thanks to the company's decision to use a four-digit combination, its locks would require up to 3 hours to hack at random, versus 15 minutes on a 3-digit lock, and the steel cable provides a strong enough barrier to cutting tools that a thief would need to be carrying a specialized tool to walk off with your pod. You'll probably want protective film for your iPod's front; that aside, these are very good cases, and not offensively huge considering that they add more than just a simple plastic shell to each model.

PRICE: \$40 Rating: B+
WWW.SECURE-IT.COM



Did you know? If you've lost your iPod, iLounge now has a Lost & Found thread in the Classifieds section of our Discussion Forums. Post, and perhaps ye shall find.

Targus Mobile Security Lock

As part of a series of three Targus locks for iPods, the Mobile Security Lock is the most interesting: all three attach to your iPod's Dock Connector port, locking in place with a three-digit combination and two tiny metal barbs that can be retracted with side-mounted buttons. This one has a plastic carrying pack that houses a thin but scissor-stopping retractable cable, allowing you to loop as much wire as necessary around a backpack or desk; the others have thicker, fixed-length cables. The only problems are that our tested locks used weak, 3-digit security and the barbs were easy to partially dislodge even when they were "locked;" a thief might damage, then leave your iPod. Regardless, the system provides a deterrent..

PRICE: \$30 Rating: C+
WWW.TARGUS.COM



i2 Electronics iLOCKr

When we reviewed iLOCKr, i2 Electronics was selling little more than a metal harness for your iPod with a three-digit padlock attached - modest security that forced you to compromise on iPod protection - the only advantage over Targus's lock was that i2's was made from thicker metal. Now the company has released updated versions for both 5G iPods and nanos, each with 3 included clear film covers for the iPod's body, resulting in a more protective and complete solution; six colors are available if the camouflage version here doesn't do it for you visually.

PRICE: \$40 Rating: C
I2ELECTRONICS.COM



iPod Security Common Sense

Be careful with sensitive files. Though some encryption programs have been released for iPod data, they won't encode your library, and aren't super popular.

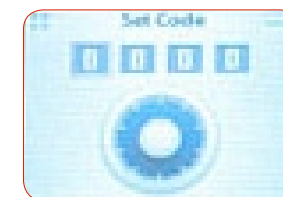
Don't leave your iPod unattended. Though a four-digit lock can keep an unwatched iPod safe for a while, brute force theft and hacking techniques work.

Think practically. Many times, keeping your iPod pocketed or changing your earbuds to less conspicuous ones will be even smarter than buying a lock.

Protect Your Library and Yourself

Apple iPod/nano Screen Lock

Fifth-generation iPod and all iPod nano users have access to a security feature called Screen Lock, found under the Extras menu. Like The Pod Safe, Screen Lock provides a pretty secure, four-digit combination lock that you can set to any code you want. Once set, only two things will unlock the iPod: the right code, or synchronizing with your copy of iTunes. Screen Lock doesn't encrypt iPod data or prevent computer snooping on the hard drive - it just locks people out from using the screen and interface.



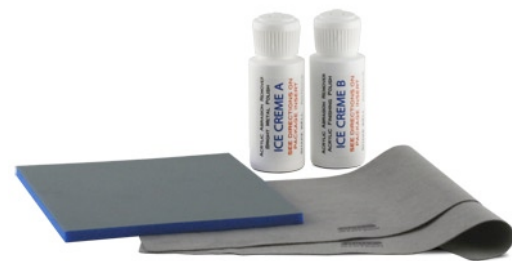
LUMi Ventures Flasher for iPod

Other than as a flashlight or as a small, overpriced club, the iPod hasn't had much use as a personal security or safety device. This year, two companies tried to change that, most notably LUMi with its Flasher, a bright LED light attachment for all Dock Connecting iPods that alternates between safety/emergency light and flashlight modes. The white and red lights are the brightest we've seen in an iPod attachment, offering a legitimate way to flag down a police car if you're stuck on the road, or keep you visible at night.



PRICE: \$20 Rating: B
WWW.LUMI-VENTURES.COM

RESTORE THE NEW IPOD GLOW CLEANERS & POLISHES



Radtech Ice Creme M Version 2

Restoring an iPod's factory-fresh sparkle isn't easy, but Radtech's Ice Creme Version 2 comes as close as we've seen to a complete solution. While the \$21 version is plastic only, and does a good job, \$26 M kit comes with both metal and plastic polishes, the latter more successful than the former. With work, Ice Creme can leave a pretty significantly scratched plastic iPod face looking very close to new, even getting out deep gouges. And while the metal polish won't restore every bit of the original chrome to a scratched iPod, you'll only see its residual hairline scratches when viewed on certain angles. Imperfections aside, this is still our first choice when trying to fix mangled iPods.

PRICE: \$21-26 RATING: A-
WWW.RADTECH.US

If your iPod's scuffed or scratched, these will bring it closer to its original lustre.

2007 iPod Buyers' Guide

DLO Care Kit for iPod

A "pretty" set of iPod cleaning and polishing bottles? Yes, DLO's Care Kit looks more like something you'd see at a cosmetics store than at CompUSA, and the idea - provide polishes and a "Daily Cleaner" bottle - is novel. But for the asking price, you'll find that the Cleaner doesn't do better than a bottle of rubbing alcohol, and you'll run out of the four included disposable cleaning pads in only a few days. We also found the polishes to be a bit too mild to really get out serious scratches, and they're not intended for use on metal. Still, the Care Kit's an interesting idea - we'll wait for a better version two.



PRICE: \$30 RATING: C+
WWW.DLO.COM



Applesauce Polish for iPod

The Applesauce Scratch Removal Kit promises metal and plastic polishing abilities at a lower price than Ice Creme, and in our tests, we found that it came close, effectively removing deep plastic scratches, but didn't do much with metal, and left the iPod's plastic a little less impressive than Radtech's solution. Since then, Applesauce has updated its offering, and now sells separate polishing and abrasive supplies that will aid in your scratch removal quest.

PRICE: \$20 RATING: B
APPLESAUCEPOLISH.COM

Cleaning and polishing solutions are generally intended only for use on the plastic-faced full-sized iPods and original iPod nanos; they don't work on all-metal iPods.

2007 iPod Buyers' Guide

These services let you transform a stock iPod into an icon with your name, logo, or colors.

MAKE IT CLEARLY YOUR OWN IPOD PERSONALIZERS

Colorware Services

Though the company's most impressive customization work (shown here) primarily benefits the rich, famous, or corporate-connected, Colorware's one- or two-color iPod re-coloring services are more affordable. The single-color service (\$74) lets you pick from 28 standard front 5G or whole nano colors, each clear-coated for protection, while the two-color service (\$94) lets you pick a second color for your Click Wheel. Diamond and laser engraving are for corporate clients only.



PRICE: \$74-94 RATING: N/A
WWW.COLORWAREPC.COM

Apple Engraving Service

Buying an iPod straight from Apple typically won't save you a dime off the suggested retail price, but it will always give you two benefits: free shipping and free engraving. Today's full-sized iPods can be engraved with two lines of text totalling 54 characters, while iPod nanos can be engraved with two lines totalling 46, and iPod shuffle gets 38 characters on one super-tiny line. Though you don't have anywhere near as much choice over fonts (one), art (none), or size (fixed) as with Etchamac's service, and can't send in old iPods to be etched, the price is right and you'll know for sure that what's there - albeit small - is properly centered in just the right sweet spot on your new iPod's back.

PRICE: FREE RATING: N/A
WWW.APPLE.COM

Etchamac Custom Laser Etching

Adding art to the back of your iPod is substantially harder than adding paint to the front - a precise cutting tool, like a laser, is needed. That's what Etchamac does: it adds black or white etched text (\$40) or text and art (\$60) to the back of any iPod or nano. You'll just need to be very careful when aligning the art - it mightn't look great on your Pod.



PRICE: \$40-60 RATING: B
WWW.ETCHAMAC.COM



Be aware: Customizing your iPod is great if you plan to keep it forever, but not so great if you hope to resell it eventually. Apple also takes longer to fix custom iPods.

Smarter iPod Workouts Athletic Accessories

2007 iPod Buyers' Guide

Dozens of sports add-ons are out there: our favorites don't compromise full iPod access.

Apple/Nike Nike + iPod Sport Kit

The single best iPod sports accessory of the year was a top-secret collaboration between two giants: athletic apparel powerhouse Nike and iPod creator Apple teamed up to develop the Nike + iPod Sport Kit, a shoe-mounted sensor that tracks foot motion, sending it to an iPod nano-mounted receiver. Whether you're walking or running a marathon, the Sport Kit keeps largely accurate track of your performance, storing the data on your iPod, then transferring it if you desire to Nikeplus.com, a personal and interpersonal comparison site with slick graphics. You can set up challenges with friends and see how they've run, or let the nano help you see how many calories, miles, or hours you've expended. Most amazing is the Kit's ability to smoothly fade male or female voice data right over whatever music you want to hear - a digital personal trainer, for \$29. Nike+ shoes cost \$80-100.



Marware Sensor+

Like the Kit but not the shoes? Marware's Sensor+ (\$10) lets you use Nike's sensor on any pair of shoes you own, attaching to their shoelaces. A cheap, viable option.

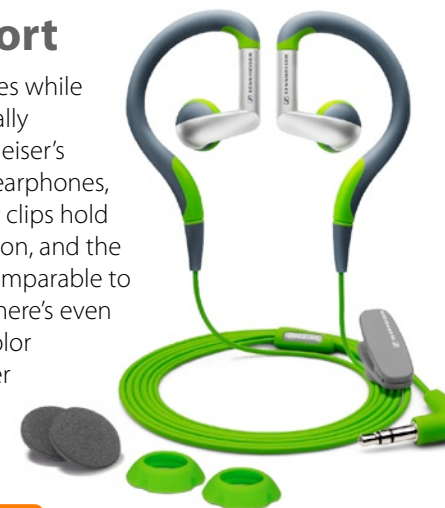
PRICE: \$29 Rating: A-
www.nikeplus.com



Did you know? Apple has released sports-ready accessories only for the iPod mini, nano, and shuffle. They've varied widely in protectivity; most are very simple.

Sennheiser OMX 70 Sport

You can wear virtually any pair of headphones while you're exercising, but very few were specifically designed for sports use. After hearing Sennheiser's sweat-, water-, and damage-resistant Sport earphones, we liked OMX 70 the best - its adjustable ear clips hold tight to your ears during even vigorous motion, and the sound quality is pretty good for the price, comparable to Apple's current pack-ins in detail and bass. There's even a great little carrying case in the package. Color aside, the only major caveat is fit - Sennheiser designed the buds to sit outside of your ears rather than in them, and some users may prefer the shape of other Sport



PRICE: \$45 Rating: A-
sennheiserusa.com

Otter Products OtterBox

Affordable. Waterproof. Drop-proof. Made largely from durable hard plastics, Otter's OtterBox series remains the least expensive way you can protect your iPod against every type of athletic damage save scuba diving - the cases are watertight to depths of 3 feet. You get full access to the screen, headphone port, and Wheel, and the case is compatible with H2O's Waterproof headphones, Otter armbands, and included belt clips.



PRICE: \$50 Rating: A-
www.otterbox.com

Other Athletic Add-Ons to Consider

Armbands. We've featured a good option from Marware in our 5G iPod Cases section; they and Incase make similar, excellent cases for iPod nanos as well.

iHome. The company's \$80 iH19 straps onto a bike, adding a water-resistant pair of speakers, iPod case, and track/play/volume buttons. It's beach-ready, too.

Bike Mounts. If you need one, Risse Racing sells Mork Mount (\$30) and Strata Systems sells iBikeMount (\$40). Our advice: ride without earphones.

iSoundCap Hats for iPod nano and shuffle

The line between a novelty and a genuinely good idea is somewhat blurry, but iSoundCap's recently-released Hats for the iPod nano and iPod shuffle are on the right side of it. With three plain-colored and two "structured", tattoo-like versions for each iPod, they let you wear the lightweight music player and earbuds out of arms' way. Though they're at their best when used during sports or workouts, and won't make you look ridiculous, they're especially street-ready with iPods removed, and look virtually identical to normal caps.



PRICE: \$30 Rating: B
www.isoundcap.com

H2O Audio Waterproof Headphones

We have been hugely impressed by H2O Audio's 10-foot waterproof iPod cases, which despite their high prices feature the best submersible designs we've yet seen. Now that the company is separately selling inexpensive, universally compatible waterproof headphones, typically worn with gray rubber cones that pipe music into your ears, there's finally an affordable way to listen safely in the rain or underwater - these work even when used at 10-foot depths, so long as you have a truly waterproof iPod case. Just don't expect the sound to be great above the waves; they excel when submerged and sound less balanced when not, the primary reason they rated a limited recommendation from us.



PRICE: \$40 Rating: B-
www.h2oaudio.com

IN THE CAR OR IN THE AIR TRAVEL ACCESSORIES

2007 iPod Buyers' Guide

Whether you're on vacation or business, these travel options can come in handy.

Bose QuietComfort 2 Noise Canceling Headphones

In our view, you have two choices when selecting travel headphones: in-canal, passive noise isolating earphones, or full-cup, active noise cancelling headphones. We generally prefer in-canal phones, which do a great job of screening out noise, but active cancellers are particularly well-suited to fighting engine rumbles and other low noises. So when we say that Bose's QuietComfort 2 is the best active noise cancelling headphone we've heard, take it in context: many companies have claimed to rival the QC2, but from what we've heard, none has succeeded. This model even covers your ears better than the smaller, more expensive QuietComfort 3, and runs longer without requiring a proprietary battery. The silver version currently in stores - quietly improved from the gold-tinted one that debuted years ago - sounds better than ever, with superior treble and mid-treble response to complement Bose's signature warm sound curve. Foldable for carrying and packed inside a nice travel case, QC2 comes with everything you need for iPod or in-flight use. Though the price tag is high, you get a best-of-class, ear-soft experience; only consider the newer QuietComfort 3 if you care so much about the headset's size that you're willing to wear the speakers right against your ears, and pay a premium for it.



PRICE: \$299 Rating: A-
[WWW.BOSE.COM](http://www.bose.com)

Did you know? Active noise cancellation technology uses microphones that "hear" certain noises around you, and produce inverse noises to block the outside sound.

Griffin SmartShare

The first generation of iPod-matching headphone port splitters had one major feature: they let two people use the iPod's headphone port at once, an ideal solution for quiet backseat or airplane listening from only one device. Besides featuring much slicker styling, Griffin's new splitter offers separate integrated volume controls for each listener, ideal for when one pair of headphones is less powerful than the other. But its major advantage over other alternatives is price: it can be had for as little as \$5 online, great design for cheap.



PRICE: \$15 Rating: A-
[GRIFFINTECHNOLOGY.COM](http://griffintechology.com)

Logitech Noise Canceling Headphones

If you want a pair of QuietComfort 2s but don't want to spend nearly \$300, Logitech's alternative is really solid: for only \$150, you come close to the QC2's sound and total travel kit package, and get approximately the same comfort and active noise cancellation technology. But this pack falls a bit short of Bose's mark in some small frills, and the sound is a little less crisp - both compromises most people will gladly accept given the bargain price.



PRICE: \$150 Rating: B+
[WWW.LOGITECH.COM](http://www.logitech.com)

Before You Travel With Your iPod

Do you need special headphones? Our answer is generally "no" - assuming you have a good pair of rubber- or foam-tipped in-canal earbuds. They work well.

What about batteries? For audio, today's iPods and nanos run for longer than almost any flight you'll take, assuming you're fully charged when you leave.

What about cases? Other than Cocoon, there are options with lots of space for accessories, and even Monster and Incase options with map pockets.

Monster Cable iSplitter 200

Following Griffin's release of SmartShare, iSplitter 200 emerged as the Monster Cable alternative - a sequel to the prior iSplitter we liked and highly recommended. Though it's essentially identical to SmartShare in core functionality, providing independent volume knobs for both of the headphone ports, iSplitter 200 adds only one new feature (a three-position mute switch that turns off one or neither of the headphone ports), and typical Monster glitz: gold-plated connectors and supposedly ruggedized cabling. You'll have to decide whether the small additions merit the premium price, but we'd stick with SmartShare unless we found iSplitter on sale.



PRICE: \$20 Rating: B+
[WWW.MONSTERCABLE.COM](http://www.monstercable.com)

STM Cocoon

Travel cases for iPods can be nicely or poorly executed - we continue to think STM's Cocoons are really smart. Inside each matte-finished hard shell is a silicone rubber case and enough netted pocket to hold earphones or another small accessory. A detachable lanyard and non-detachable belt clip come with each Cocoon set; the 5G's belt clip is nicer, but the nano's lanyard is more useful. We think the 5G's version is a bit better than the nano's, but both use great dual zippers and allow your earphone cables to be accessed very easily.



PRICE: \$40 Rating: A
[WWW.RADTECH.US](http://www.radtch.us)

DAYS OF CONTINUOUS PLAY Add-on Battery Packs

They're rarely small, but these external power packs let you keep playing video or audio.

Sonnet Volta

Once upon a time, it was merely difficult to develop a universal iPod battery solution, but now, with radically different sizes for iPods, nanos, and shuffles, no one's even trying. So we've focused on batteries for the iPod that needs extra power the most: the fifth-generation iPod, which despite recent gains in video play time still requires external assistance for extended movie watching. Sonnet's Volta delivers that help in an inoffensively thick black package, adding 60 continuous hours of music playback time and between 9 (original 5G) to 16.5 (Enhanced 5G) hours of video to the iPods' original run times, letting you hear 74-80 hours of music or watch up to 23 hours of video with a fully charged 5G. A Dock Connector-to-USB cable is included for recharging - an extended (5-hour) process - and a twistable, detachable belt clip is there if you want it. While not as completely conceived as iLuv's i603 and i604, it performs well at a fair price point given the battery's capacity, and isn't a chore to carry around.

PRICE: \$70 A-
WWW.SONNETTECH.COM



Looking for a nano battery pack? We like iLuv's \$50-55 i601 and i602, but they only fit the plastic nanos - for now. These other batteries will work, but they're huge.

Tekkeon myPower

With a \$60 white version and \$70 black version, myPower has fallen a lot in price since we first reviewed it, and does better with newer iPods than ever before - 5Gs can expect around 40 hours of audio and 9-15 hours of video, depending on the model, while older models will run closer to 35 hours on audio. myPower's also more modular than other batteries, with integrated data ports that connect to optional FM transmitter and car charger accessories.



PRICE: \$60+ Rating: B+
WWW.TEKKEON.COM

Better Energy Solio

Sometimes - say, if you're on safari - you won't be near a wall outlet when you need to recharge your iPod's battery. That's when Solio comes in handy. An hour of sunshine can give you about an hour of play time, iPod-dependent, and Solio can store between 8 and 10 hours of energy in its built-in battery pack. Environmentally friendly, it includes a wall charger for use when the sun's not cooperating.



PRICE: \$100 Rating: B+
WWW.SOLIO.COM

The Why's and How's of Battery Packs

Why do you need one? You might not. Unlike 2004 models, 2006 iPods play music for half a day or more between charges. Video and photos need more juice.

How do I charge them? Virtually all of today's batteries are recharged for 4-5 hours with iPod standard USB cables via your PC; some come with wall chargers.

How do I use them? Today, the answer is "mostly for travel." Real video fans can use the same cash towards a portable video display with a battery inside.

BTI IP-V01 and IP-B02

Every year, we mention BTI's big and relatively powerful iPod battery packs, now known by code letters: formerly The iPod Battery ii, the \$98 iPod-agnostic IP-B02 is shown, while the same battery called IP-V01 is more expensive, but comes with a silicone case and pop-out video stand-slash-belt clip. From a design standpoint, time has passed them by - they're bigger and heavier than other alternatives we've subsequently tested. Yet they deliver insane playback times with 5G iPods - many days of music, and substantially more than a full day of continuous video. Found at a discount, they offer a lot of power for the buck, but really need to evolve cosmetically in 2007 to stay in the game.



PRICE: \$98+ Rating: A-
WWW.BATTERYTECH.COM

iLuv i603/i604

Batteries built into silicone rubber cases? That's i603 (30GB 5G iPods only) and i604 (60/80GB 5G iPods only). Available in black or white with chrome bottoms, each with a charger, they look great and outperform their promised 42- and 55-hour respective audio times. If only they weren't so model-specific!



PRICE: \$65 Rating: B+
WWW.ILUV.COM

Up and Coming

We're not going to tell you that we loved **XtremeMac's MicroPack** (\$100, below) - we didn't, because of some flakiness in its charging behaviors with our 5G iPods - but the concept here is an interesting one. Combining a full iPod dock with twin headphone ports, separate amplifiers, and a battery, MicroPack is supposed to be an 8-hour video, 80-hour audio add-on with the convenience of a travel stand. If Xtreme can work the bugs out, this could be a winner.



RECHARGE, COMPUTER FREE WALL POWER ADAPTERS

With no charger in your iPod's box, your best options will cost \$20 and up - here they are.

Sonnet USB Power Adapter for iPod

Despite their undeniable utility - they are in the top three most popular types of iPod accessories - there's no doubt that power adapters for the iPod are the least sexy of all add-ons we cover. Once Apple stopped packing them in with iPods, people were forced to buy the overpriced \$29 adapters separately if they wanted to untether their drained iPods from their computers - Best Buy capitalized on this by charging up to \$40 per adapter. Thankfully, Sonnet Technologies stepped in and released the desperately needed USB Power Adapter for iPod, a nugget-shaped charger that comes in white or black, includes an iPod-to-USB cable, and sells for only \$20. In the United States, it's the best charger value out there right now, and the first option we'd recommend to virtually all of our readers. Only if you need more should you spend more.

PRICE: \$20 RATING: A-
WWW.SONNETTECH.COM



Did you know? In 2005, chargers gradually slipped out of iPod boxes - the shuffle didn't include one, the mini lost it, and the fifth-generation iPod finished the trend.

Apple iPod USB Power Adapter

Yes, Apple created the iPod, and yes, it designed a sleek little power adapter, but wow - \$29 is a lot to pay for something that most companies give away for free, especially when no iPod connection cable is included in the box. Consequently, lower-cost adapters have been selling like hot cakes. So rather than drop its price, Apple recently made changes to its USB Power Adapter to make it more desirable: the new one is much smaller than before, and finally comes with its own USB-to-iPod cable, like virtually all the other options out there. At 1.75" square, the new adapter's only a little wider than a nano and about twice as thick as a full-sized 80GB iPod, which is great for a bag, not your wallet.



PRICE: \$29 RATING: B+
WWW.APPLE.COM

Logiix The iPower Pro

The iPower Pro is accurately touted as an ultra-slim USB charger for the iPod - it's one of the thinnest power supplies out there, and comes in black or white versions, each with a matching iPod-to-USB cable and zippered fabric iPod travel case. Like Apple's solution, you'll have to cough up nearly \$30 here, but Logiix also offers a stripped down version called the USB+ Charger without the cable or case. Consider both to be pretty good options, though Sonnet's pack is still the best for the dollar.



PRICE: \$28 RATING: B+
WWW.LOGIIX.NET

A Must-Purchase? Maybe Not.

They're really not necessary, unless... If you're planning to recharge away from your PC, or don't have a powered USB port. Most computers can recharge iPods.

What convenience do you need? If you don't like to use your computer for recharging, any one will do. If you're buying one for travel, think "small."

Be very careful. Cheap power chargers sold by no-name companies can damage your iPod beyond easy repair. Buy from a recommended brand name.

Griffin PowerDuo

At first blush, you might wonder why a \$40 iPod adapter could even be worth considering, but there are two simple answers: pack-ins and street pricing. PowerDuo bundles a wall charger, a car charger, and two USB cables into a single box - one USB cable is iPod-to-full USB, the other is USB-to-mini-USB, for use with many Griffin accessories and cell phones. When you realize you can get PowerDuos for around \$20 online, you'll begin to see the value.



PRICE: \$40 RATING: A-
GRIFFINTECHNOLOGY.COM

Capdase Universal AC Adapter for iPod Series

Readers outside of the United States will find Capdase's Universal AC Adapter set easier to locate, but no matter where you are, if you're a traveler, it's worth your time to locate one. This single package combines a wall charger with tethered iPod Dock Connector alongside four wall blades used in a number of the world's most popular tourist destinations. A great value, assuming shipping costs don't put you off.



PRICE: \$28 RATING: B+
WWW.CAPDASE.COM

COMFORTABLE BUDS, CHEAP
LOW-END EARPHONES

Earbuds for under \$50 won't change your music, but they'll fit great and sound good.

Sony MDR-EX81

There are literally hundreds of headphones selling for under \$50 today - any factory can make them, and any company can sell them. But most of them don't sound or feel very good. Sony's MDR-EX81 is an exception: based on the company's most comfortable earphones - the silicone-tipped but muddy-sounding MDR-EX71 in-canal earbuds - these make massive improvements to the sound quality, and use rubber and metal over-ear mounts to better stay in place for extended listening. Though a fraction of those who try EX81 find the mounting pieces less than perfect for their ear sizes, the majority of users are blown away by their balanced sound, impressive inner-ear comfort, and tremendous sound isolation, which blocks out the world around you. Like other earphones that depend on fit, we advise you to buy them from a seller with a good return policy, but if they fit, you will absolutely love them for the price - they're commonly found for \$32 online.

PRICE: \$50 RATING: A
WWW.SONYSTYLE.COM

Why haven't any under-\$50's won a Headphone of the Year award? As great as these are for the price, we strongly recommend investing in better quality options.

Apple iPod Earphones

For the first time since we began to publish our Buyers' Guides three years ago, we are actively recommending Apple's iPod Earphones as a replacement for... Apple's iPod Earphones. If you have an older iPod, you most certainly have the company's prior-generation buds, which only felt comfortable in many ears when covered with black included foams, and lacked for bass. Apple's just-released replacements are silicone-edged for extra comfort, sound even better (including more apparent bass), and are smaller and lighter. If you don't want canalphones, which offer superior sound isolation, they're worth the low price of an upgrade.

PRICE: \$29 RATING: B+
WWW.APPLE.COM



Philips SHE9501

If clean, powerful sound is what you're after, and the MDR-EX81s don't look right for your ears, the SHE9501s offer a cheaper and less ear-intrusive alternative. Designed with long plastic stalks and a neck cable that's decidedly longer on the right side than the left, the SHE9501s don't go as snugly into your ear canals as the Sonys, or as loosely around your neck as most earphones, a combination which some will like and others won't. But their sound is a rival for the new Apples, a good thing, and some will find the added silicone more comfy.

PRICE: \$30 RATING: B+
WWW.PHILIPSUSA.COM

Realities of Low-Cost
(Under-\$50) Phones

Bad ones garble your music. You may not even realize how muddled songs sound until you try a pair of \$100 phones. Once you do, you'll never, ever go back.

Ear fatigue is common. Old headphones went on top of your ears, new ones fit inside, and rest in sensitive ear canals. Hard plastic is common and uncomfortable.

Sound may vary from unit to unit. Quality control is especially bad on low-priced buds - two pairs from one bad company may sound very different.

iSkin Cerulean XLR

Like the Remix M-Class, iSkin's Cerulean XLRs are immediately noteworthy for their looks: the company produces the mostly white or gray phones in eight color combinations, each with eye-catching accents and matching ear foams. Roughly equivalent to Apple's old earphones on sound quality and comfort, they're bested by Remix overall, but much cheaper (only \$15) than any other good option when purchased with an iSkin case.

PRICE: \$30* RATING: B+
WWW.ISKIN.COM



v-moda Remix M-Class

Rare is the low-cost earbud that catches our attention on both looks and sound quality, but v-moda's Remix M-Class did both. Made from metal in your choice of pink, blue, or a dark chrome ("bling bling black"), they resemble Apple's prior iPod earbuds in looks, but sound a lot better. Their metallic bodies and silicone edging feel cool and comfortable in your ears, while metallic cabling matches current nano colors without looking cheap or tacky. Great design, great sound.

PRICE: \$50 RATING: A-
WWW.V-MODA.COM



STEP UP, REVEAL THE MUSIC MID-RANGE EARPHONES



For under \$150, these earbuds will help you hear details you've never heard in any song.

Etymotic ER-6i

Last year's headphone of the year only gets better with age. It's not just that Etymotic sells both black- and white-cabled versions of the ER-6i, or that the earphones remain the reference standard in detail at their suggested retail price - it's mostly that they can now be had for \$90 or less if you shop online. Some readers might wonder what justifies the price, and the answer is simple: like their more expensive, award-winning older brother ER-4P, ER-6i lets you experience music in ways less expensive (and some more expensive) alternatives can't offer. Instruments and voices formerly blended together suddenly stand apart in your ears, letting you come closer to what recording artists and engineers originally wanted you to hear. The only way you'll do better on detail is to spend more money, and even then, you mightn't rival ER-6i's comfort. Etymotic's included ear tips - distinctive silicone rubber triple flanges and foams - provide outstanding comfort and noise isolation, and a nice included carrying case helps you tote them around. Missing? Rich bass - Etymotic keeps its low-end tight and accurate, which we like.

PRICE: \$149 Rating: A
WWW.ETYMOTIC.COM

Why aren't these names familiar? Most major consumer electronics companies tend to focus on high-volume, lower-priced earphones rather than \$100-and-uppers.

XtremeMac FS1

If you love bass, there are dozens of sub-\$50 earphones that will fill your ears with chunky sounds. XtremeMac's FS1 - developed by Future Sonics - offer tons of low-end sound without all the muddiness of cheap earphones. Paired with the included foam earpieces rather than the rubber ones, FS1 delivers big, warm renditions of your favorite songs, ideal for dance and rap tracks, plus just enough detail to let you hear things you didn't realize were in your favorite songs. It helps that the FS1s look sharper in either white or black colors than most high-end earphones.

PRICE: \$150 Rating: B+
WWW.XTREMEMAC.COM

Ultimate Ears super.fi 3 Studio

As the younger, less expensive sibling to Ultimate Ears' excellent super.fi 5 Pro, the super.fi 3 Studio has an awful lot to offer: Though it's not a bass cruncher on the level of the 5 Pros, the super-bass 5 EBs, or the peer-priced FS1s above, it's par for the course with the UM1s, delivering clean and detailed low-end that doesn't thump. But where it earns its keep is in the detailed midrange and high end, where UE has given music a lively sparkle that doesn't sound artificial. super.fi 3's only issues are common to UE buds - they poke out of your ears like Frankenstein bolts and do much better when wrapped around your ear tops, then used with foams.

PRICE: \$100 Rating: A-
WWW.ULTIMATEEARS.COM

Where Mid-Range Earbuds Excel

High-end detail. The first thing you're likely to notice when stepping up is more treble detail - sound begins to sparkle, and you hear once-hidden background details.

Clearer low-end detail. Bass notes stop sounding like dull thuds and start to reveal texture and softness. You may even hear voices or beats that weren't there before.

Energy (aka "pop"). Music becomes more alive, with a greater sense that you're there, it's happening around you, and it's exciting or engrossing. Seriously.

Westone UM1

Few earphones can touch the ER-6is on overall sound quality for the dollar, but Westone's UM1 comes very close. The transparent-bodied earphone delivers almost as much apparent detail as the ER-6i, but slightly massages the treble to produce a modestly smoother high-end sound, and adds just that much more low-end. Consequently, music preserves most of ER-6i's punch, yet leans just enough more "natural" sound to please some users. Soft foam caps, light cables, and wisely shaped bodies make them amongst the most comfortable, too.

PRICE: \$109 Rating: A-
WWW.WESTONE.COM

Shure E2c

Let's set the record straight about Shure's E2cs: when used with the right eartips, and properly inserted into the right-sized set of ears, these are great earphones. And by great, we mean A-caliber, with seriously rich, engaging sound that rivals the best offerings on these two pages. The only problem is that the E2cs don't sound great with the cool-looking, pictured rubber eartips, are physically large - the largest in this section - and work best when their thick cords are worn around the tops of your ears. If you have bigger ears or can manage to situate them comfortably in your smaller ones, which isn't hard if you play around a bit with the foam inserts, you'll love how they sound; we found their competitors easier fits.

PRICE: \$109 Rating: B+
WWW.SHURE.COM



ALL YOUR MUSIC, LAID BARE DELUXE EARPHONES

For under \$300, these earbuds will literally change the way you think of music, forever.

Etymotic ER-4P

Two years ago, Etymotic's ER-4P was our Audio Accessory of the Year, and since then, Etymotic has only made it better. As we've explained at great length on the site, we've been through several pairs of ER-4Ps due to no fault of their manufacture, and have always felt compelled to replace them - despite their premium pricing, the model's rendition of audio is so transparent and detailed - literally studio-accurate - that we've considered them the standard by which other headphones should be judged; only their bass is slightly weak. Alongside a modest price cut, the company has improved 4P's cables to eliminate noises heard in motion, sleekened the carrying case, darkened its earpieces, and cut the size of its minijack plug, in each case making ER-4P easier to use and less visually conspicuous. Though Westone's UM2 offers a great-sounding alternative, ER-4P's light weight, great isolation, and detailed sound are at peak levels for its price; shopping online will shave a considerable amount off the total.

PRICE: \$299 Rating: A
WWW.ETYMOTIC.COM

What's the difference between a stand and a dock? Electronics. Stands are holders, while docks include parts that interface with your iPod's bottom connector.

Ultimate Ears **super.fi 5 Pro**

Double-driver earphone designs can be used for good - more detailed, energetic sound than the best \$150 single-driver earphones - or for evil, adding crazy amounts of bass to any track that comes their way. (Just kidding, bassheads.) The super.fi 5 EB does the latter, while 5 Pro does the former, to great results. Only a step below the Etymotic ER-4Ps in clarity, the 5 Pros are smooth operators in the bass department, providing richer sound without becoming overaggressive like the EB's. The caveat? Again, their ear-protruding shape, which UE mitigates by offering 3 colors and partial memory cords to loop over your ears.

PRICE: \$250 Rating: A-
WWW.ULTIMATEEARS.COM

Altec Lansing **iM716**

Introduced late last year, Altec's iM716 fuses Etymotic-developed ER-4 technology with a hipper, more iPod-ready white and gray casing and one feature the ER-4Ps lack: a bass switch. Found in a box located mid-cable, the bass switch enables fans of bass to receive a little extra boost, while everyone else can leave the switch off. True to Etymotic form, the bass isn't super-powerful - bassheads will find the super.fi 5 EB or FS1s much better - but these are smaller, and with shopping, lots (think \$110-120 total price) cheaper.

PRICE: \$200 Rating: B+
WWW.ALTECLANSING.COM

How Do They Do It? Double-Driver Audio

Two speakers per ear. The majority of earphones in this price class actually place two miniature speakers in each earpiece, generally one for bass, the other full-range.

Westone **UM2**

As one of the strongest double-driver earphones we've heard, Westone's UM2s are a sonic rival to the super.fi 5 Pros, but with a slightly different sound signature that's a little warmer at the expense of treble detail, a balance many people will like. The bigger difference is their fit: the UM2s are decidedly more comfortable thanks to an ear-hugging shape, braided cabling, and smooth, rather than rough-edged foam inserts. But they're also more expensive, and not discounted.

PRICE: \$299 Rating: A-
WWW.WESTONE.COM

Ultimate Ears **super.fi 5 EB**

As noted in our earlier XtremeMac FS1 mention, anyone can release a cheap, bassy headphone. UE's super.fi 5 EB ("Extended Bass") steps up the bass from the FS1s (and more markedly, the iM716s here), offering a level of in-ear boom that's comparable to some popular low-end earphones such as Sony's MDR-EX71, minus the murkiness. Though you won't hear as much detail in the EB as in the 5 Pro, and will find the earpieces even more oddly shaped, you'll pay less and love the bass. White and black versions are available, the latter a bit less conspicuous.

PRICE: \$200 Rating: A-
WWW.ULTIMATEEARS.COM

Size becomes a concern. Having two drivers in an enclosure has previously led to earphones that stick out of your ears or require lots of cable or outer ear support.

Different styles, different users. Some companies use the drivers to exaggerate sounds, others use them to add details to prior unclear parts of the spectrum.

PRICEY, UNBEATABLE SOUND PREMIUM EARPHONES

Top-quality headsets can bring out details and bass that even the musicians didn't hear.

Shure E500PTH

We typically reserve Best of the Year awards for products all of our readers can afford, but it's our sincere belief that there's no better pair of iPod-ready earphones on the planet than Shure's E500s. And we've tested quite a few, including universal (\$400) and custom-fit (\$900) Ultimate Ears models, the latter touted as nearly "flat" (read: neutral), reference-quality earpieces for musicians. That they are. But the E500s eschew neutrality, aiming for ear-pleasing yet incredibly detailed sound, and the result is electric: whether you're looking for rich bass, detailed midrange and treble, or just amorphous "great sound," the E500s are sure to please, and fit snugly inside your ears. And this isn't just coming from two or three of us: when the E500s satisfied the disparate listening tastes and ear shapes of five iLounge editors, which we thought wasn't possible. Expensive? Yes, and the PTH unit is gimmicky, but thankfully detachable. That aside, they're worth every penny, the mark of a best of class, award-worthy design.

What's PTH?

"Push To Hear." This included unit lets you keep your buds in and still hear outside noises. It's easily detached from the E500 earphones and replaced with an extension cable for bulk-free listening, if you don't need it.



PRICE: \$499 RATING: A
WWW.SHURE.COM

ILOUNGE
2006
BEST
EARPHONES

Last year, the difference between top Deluxe and Premium earphones was small but noticeable. Now the performance gap has widened and the price gap narrowed.



AKG k701

AKG's k701 is to iPod headphones what Shure's E500 is to in-canal earphones: incomparable bliss. Leaving aside their classy, iPod-matching styling - white with chrome and gray accents - which is decidedly cooler than Shure's more neutrally colored design, the k701 offers every reason possible to give up earbuds in favor of larger circumaural earcups. Thanks in part to velvet-covered, "3D foam" padding on the speakers, and a nicely padded, auto-adjusting leather headband, you slip into the k701s like a cozy pair of pajamas, and on feel alone, won't want to take them off. Then the music hits you - big, incredibly rich sound of the sort that only large, expensive headphones can deliver - only by full-sized headphone standards, they're actually mid-ranged in price. Like the E500s, detail isn't sacrificed in the smooth and natural delivery - the k701 sound is as transparent as any of the other phones here. Just realize that you'll want to keep them at home - they're big, and not designed for travel. Trust us, you won't mind.

PRICE: \$400 RATING: A
WWW.AKG.COM

Make the Most of Premium Earphones

Rip your CDs at high bitrates. Using 128kbps iTunes songs or ripped CDs doesn't do your music any favors. Good earphones will reveal compression flaws.

Set aside time for listening. Many people consider music to be a brief distraction. These earphones turn even well-known tracks into engaging entertainment.

Consider a "knockabout" pair. You'll cherish headphones of this quality level enough to fear losing them. A spare pair (like iPod pack-ins) can go anywhere.



Ultimate Ears UE-10 Pro

As we noted last year, the UE-10 Pros are the ultimate luxury for serious listeners - pro musician-caliber earpieces that are literally molded to fit only your ears - a process that requires a trip to an audiologist and yields hearing aid-sized rubber and plastic monitors that you can fully customize by color, cabling, and even side artwork, the latter a recent and eye-catching addition to the company's earlier formula. Once inserted, you'll hear pristine, reference-quality sound with slightly extended bass response - a balance that's like Etymotic's ER-4Ps, only with a bit more low-end, favored by recording artists for use in live performances and tour buses alike. If you're looking to hear every possible detail in your music collection, the UE-10s are essentially unrivaled, though they come at a real premium relative to newer triple-driver solutions, and aren't equalized to provide the same type of energy. Sophisticated sound for those who can afford and appreciate it.

PRICE: \$900 RATING: A-
WWW.ULTIMATEEARS.COM

Ultimate Ears triple.fi 10 Pro

No earphone demonstrates the changes wrought by Shure's E500s better than Ultimate Ears' latest and greatest earphone, the triple.fi 10 Pro. Like the UE-10 Pro, the triple.fi is a triple-driver earpiece designed to deliver unsurpassed detail, but there are two massive differences: the UE-10 Pro sells for \$900 and requires a custom fitting session with an audiologist, while the triple.fi 10 Pro sells for \$400 and doesn't. Here's the bigger shock - the triple.fi 10 Pro will please the average person's ears more than the neutral UE-10 Pros, which are designed less to color music than to present it accurately. The triple.fis bring some of the liveliness and energy of the super.fi 5 Pros to the superior triple-driver threshold of performance, and for the asking price, that's great. But comfort and aggregate sound quality count for a lot at this price level, and the E500s have triple.fi beat by more than a bit on both. At this price level, you're probably looking for the best - these come close, so if you're looking to save some money, try them.

PRICE: \$400 RATING: A-
WWW.ULTIMATEEARS.COM



LISTEN, SYNC, OR BOTH AUDIO OR DATA DOCKS

If video-out isn't critical, some docks handle audio or data output, sometimes both.

Kensington Stereo Dock

In the days before iPods with video, Kensington's Stereo Dock was king of the iPod audio dock hill: stripped down to the bare essentials needed to let you control your iPod when docked with a home stereo, the Stereo Dock did one thing, and very well. For the price, which was below the total cost of separately buying a dock, Infrared remote control, audio cables and wall power supply - all included in the box - you could get all the pieces you needed, cleanly styled. The backlit remote worked reliably, and fit into a storage nook on top of the dock when not in use. Good news: Stereo Dock's still available, and more aggressively priced than ever online. All it lacks are video and data sync ports, plus the RF (radio frequency) remote control found in its newer brother, the Entertainment Dock 500. We still think this is a very strong, affordable option for those who need an audio-only iPod connection.

PRICE: \$60 Rating: A-
WWW.KENSINGTON.COM

Though audio- or data-only docks could be seen as outdated because they lack the video-outs used by newer video iPods, they're cheap and do well at their tasks.

Atech Flash iDuo

The rare iPod accessory that has grown in our estimation over time, Atech's iDuo isn't - pardon the pun - flashy looking, but its ability to serve as both an iPod data dock and as a memory card reader for major formats (CompactFlash I and II, SD, MMC, Memory Stick and MS Pro, xD and Smart Media) has kept it on our desks and in our bags during trips. Though iDuo's dock well isn't quite a true Universal Dock, it works with any docking iPod, and you need to connect two cables (one for the flash card reader, one for the iPod) - the single biggest negative of the design - this is a fundamentally good and useful accessory that saves on desk space, if not USB ports. It has a S-Video out port, but that's not the major reason to get one.



PRICE: \$40 Rating: B
WWW.ATECHFASH.COM

SwitchEasy KuroDock

Sometimes a simple design just works: KuroDock - kuro is Japanese for black - is the best dedicated iPod nano dock we've seen. Designed to match the original 2005 glossy black nano, KuroDock did the same things (data/audio) as Apple's iPod nano Dock, but added a cool white light bar to the front and didn't force you to compromise on size. Small, reasonably priced, and with a USB cable in the box, all you'll need to buy separately is a \$9 power charger - a much better deal than Apple's. KuroDock for new nanos is coming, thankfully.



PRICE: \$30 Rating: B+
WWW.SWITCHEASY.COM

Understanding One-Purpose Docks

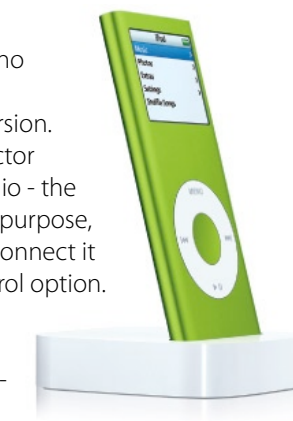
Buying for a specific iPod? Think again. If that's what you want, OK, but remember: next year's iPod might be a different size or shape. "Universal Docks" are future-proof.

Be sure it does exactly what you want. iPod docks can charge your iPod, sync data with a PC/Mac, output audio, output S-video, and/or output composite video.

Consider PocketDocks. SendStation's series of tiny attachments offer full-sized dock functionality in a size that can be used in a car or packed for travel.

Apple iPod nano Dock

At press time, there's only one dedicated iPod nano dock that fits Apple's aluminum-bodied second-generation nanos, and that's the official Apple version. With only two ports on the back - a Dock Connector for data and charging, and a line-out port for audio - the iPod nano Dock doesn't include cables for either purpose, allowing you to supply your own if you want to connect it to a stereo or computer, and has no remote control option. Though we like the size and looks a lot, you're better future-proofed buying an Apple Universal Dock instead, and better valued with a KuroDock-style option.



PRICE: \$29 Rating: B
WWW.APPLE.COM

Belkin TuneSync

Judged solely by its suggested retail price, TuneSync doesn't make a lot of sense: it's an iPod dock that also happens to have a powered 5-port USB 2.0 hub built in to its relatively large, glossy white base, pieces you could buy separately for the same price. And there's only an audio output port - nothing for video. But it makes a single connection to your computer with an included USB cable, comes with its own USB power supply, and eliminates a little desk clutter. You may find it handy, though not quite as small as you might like.



PRICE: \$66 Rating: B-
WWW.BELKIN.COM

CONTROL FROM A DISTANCE WIRELESS RF REMOTES

Need to listen to your iPod while it's safely stowed away? These RF-based remotes help.

ABT iJet Wireless Remote with Bottom Dock

When it comes to offering the ability to control your iPod from great distances - 100 tested feet away - ABT's iJet rules the iPod RF remote world, making it easy to change tracks from a room away or outside. The included small remote has five obvious buttons and multiple hidden functions, communicating with a large plastic base that sits on the bottom of your iPod. The good news is that iJet's base has a pass-through Dock Connector port, allowing you to control you connected iPod while it sits in almost any remote-less iPod dock or works in your car, playing music and recharging its battery. But the volume control buttons don't have any effect on audio there, so you'll need to make a second audio connection (not possible with the iPod nano, which has its own versions of iJet), or manually adjust your speakers. Integrated speaker docks with remotes handle volume and other controls more gracefully, and Belkin now sells a hybrid remote and dock solution called TuneCommand AV that is smarter, but weird when it comes to video controls. This is a strong option.

PRICE: \$40 Rating: B+
www.abttech2.com



Did you know? RF (radio frequency) remotes let you broadcast through walls and generally from greater distances than Infrared remotes - up to five times further.

Griffin AirClick for Dock Connector iPods

The first version of AirClick was exciting: an iPod remote control that was equal parts powerful, good-looking, and comfortable in the hand. Its bottom-mounting sequel is the same product with a different iPod connector, lacking ABT's Dock Connector pass-through port. Consequently, all the new version does is let you use the iPod's headphone port from 50 feet away. Some in-car users will still find this handy - a steering wheel strap is included for the remote - but indoor users will find it a couple steps down from iJet.

PRICE: \$40 Rating: B-
www.griffintech.com



Scosche 150' Wireless RF Sport Remote

As one of three similar options for use with iPods and nanos, Scosche's 150' Wireless RF Sport Remote is a bit misnamed. ABT-developed, it works just fine when used as designed to control an iPod inside your jacket, and comes with boxy wearable remote control, a simple two-piece wrist- or armband, and an iPod receiver with a pass-through Dock Connector port on the bottom. When used outdoors, that feature isn't super useful, nor are the smaller and less glove-friendly remote buttons. But for indoor or dual-purpose use, it's pretty good - just more like 60 feet than 150.

PRICE: \$80 Rating: B
www.scosche.com



Reasons You Might Want a Remote

In-home control. Want to change tracks or pause status for bottom port audio? Or those things and volume for the iPod's headphone port audio? You can.

In-car control. Just like the in-home features, these remotes work in your car. AirClick includes simple steering wheel attachments, but no way to recharge.

Mid-sport control. All of these remotes work outdoors, but the Sport remotes are designed to provide control of an iPod safely hidden inside your jacket.

Belkin SportCommand

Of the sports-ready RF remote controls we've seen, Belkin's SportCommand - dual neoprene armbands and a carabiner hook coupled with a remote and an iPod Dock Connector dongle - executes best on its stated feature. Unlike Scosche's and Monster's plastic remotes, which use hard plastic in an attempt to guarantee durability, SportCommand's larger, water- and tear-resistant fabric body provides greater surface area for its buttons; similarly, its lack of thickness makes use on any part of your body much less of a concern - it can even be attached to the included hook and worn as a necklace. Though it promises only a 50-foot broadcasting distance, it did better than the Scosche in our tests, and has no problem with clothes. Indoor use? It blocks the iPod's docking port, so Scosche wins there.

PRICE: \$80 Rating: B+
www.belkin.com



Monster iEZClick

As sports remotes go, Monster's iEZClick is interesting but not great. With a better remote control and armband design than Scosche's, iEZClick also straps on to your arm and has a tiny receiver on your iPod. The receiver has no pass-through port, the remote only works at distances of around 20 feet, and it's the bulkiest of the bunch - but together, the parts do work as promised to provide iPod control outdoors.

PRICE: \$80 Rating: B-
www.monstercable.com



STEREO, WITH NO WIRES WIRELESS AUDIO KITS



Griffin BlueTrip LE

It's been said many times before - and accurately - that the iPod would be the best possible remote control for a home stereo, but the cheapest solutions (long cables) are impractical, and prior iPod wireless kits have been too expensive. Griffin's BlueTrip LE lets you achieve wireless nirvana at an appropriate price, pairing an iPod Dock Connector-equipped transmitter with a large white and chrome receiver for your home stereo, plus audio cabling and a power adapter. Though it uses the aging Bluetooth 1.2 wireless standard, it broadcasts reliably at 33-foot distances, and sounds quite good - close enough to CD-quality that most users will be very satisfied. Be aware - it will drain your iPod's battery when in use - but for the price, its ability to turn your iPod into a convenient wireless jukebox for any pair of speakers is pretty much unbeatable, and worth experimenting with until Bluetooth 2.0 options become available at reasonable prices.

PRICE: \$100 RATING: B+
GRIFFINTECHNOLOGY.COM



Whether you're looking to sever headphone or home stereo wires, these kits will help.

2007 iPod Buyers' Guide

Piecemeal wireless solutions aren't great. Scosche's car-, home-, and headset-ready wireless system is the smartest complete solution we've seen so far, but pricey.

TEN Technology naviPlay SHK

Want a wireless headset for your iPod? You'll have to compromise a bit: comfort, physical size, sound quality, and price vary a lot from headset to headset. TEN's naviPlay Stereo Headset Kit gets the comfort and sound quality parts pretty close to right: the nicely cushioned headset sounds good and is less fatiguing than most competitors. TEN uses the iPod's Dock Connector port for a clean audio connection and includes a stand that lets you keep the iPod upright if you want. You'll get eight hours of play time, plus the ability to take cell phone calls with an integrated mic - if the components' size and price are acceptable given your needs and budget.

PRICE: \$200 RATING: B
WWW.TENTECHNOLOGY.COM



Scosche BlueLife System

The single most impressive thing that Scosche has done with BlueLife - a series of \$200-250 Bluetooth 1.2 audio kits - is to deliver a complete vision for a wireless iPod future: the \$200 Headphone Kit competes with FreePulse and the naviPlay Stereo Headset Kit, while separate \$250 In-Home and In-Car Kits turn home stereos and many car stereos into wireless Bluetooth receivers. Hook up everything and your iPod can go wirelessly from portable to in-home to in-car use. But pricing, comfort of the headphones, size of the iPod pack, and BT1.2 are issues - a BlueLife 2.0 could be huge.

PRICE: \$200-250 RATING: B
WWW.SCOSCHE.COM



Next-Generation Wireless iPod Tech

Bluetooth 2.0+EDR is coming. Logitech's FreePulse is the first iPod wireless kit with this newer, faster, lower-power technology. But others (like Belkin) are coming soon.

What will Apple do for iPods? No one's sure. Speculation is that Apple will use its own proprietary wireless standard and add-ons, but months or years could pass.

Remember iTV. Audio is only one part of the wireless universe. Sending videos and photos to a TV via iTunes is Apple's next Mac/PC plan, coming early 2007.

Logitech FreePulse Headphones

While TEN's naviPlay got part of the wireless headset puzzle right, Logitech's newer FreePulse Wireless Headphones offer different advantages. They're smaller, lighter, and a lot less expensive - all positives - and use the newer, higher-fidelity Bluetooth 2.0+EDR wireless standard; naviPlay uses older Bluetooth 1.2. Though FreePulse doesn't connect to the iPod's Dock Connector, run as long (only 6 hours) or include a mic for cell phone calls, the price is right, assuming the headset fits. Users with small or large heads may find the earpieces loose or fatiguing. Buy from a store with a good return policy - if they fit, you'll be impressed, especially by their greater-than-33 foot receiving distance and clarity.

PRICE: \$100 RATING: B+
WWW.LOGITECH.COM



Apple AirPort Express

For high-fidelity wireless access to your iTunes music library, there's no option better than Apple's AirPort Express. It digitally sends music - even true CD-quality lossless audio files - from your PC or Mac to a home stereo system, connecting via either an optical audio cable (better) or RCA-style analog cable, both of which you'll have to supply yourself. It also works as an 802.11b/g wireless router, extender, or print server, depending on your needs.

PRICE: \$129 RATING: B+
WWW.APPLE.COM



What time is it? IPOD ALARM CLOCKS

2007 iPod Buyers' Guide

Combination iPod speaker docks and alarm clocks will wake you up to your favorite song.

iHome iH7 Dual Alarm Clock

Last year, iHome released the iH5 (right), an excellent iPod alarm clock at an attractive \$100 price. Available in black and white versions, the brand new iH7 improves upon it in key ways, adding a second alarm, a third "bedside" cabled speaker, four preset stations per AM/FM band, and an eight-level dimmer for the backlit LCD clock. The included ten-button Infrared remote control also improves upon the one found in some, but not all iH5 boxes. Sound quality remains solid, but not spectacular for a docking speaker at this price level - the compromise you face given all the unit's other features - but iH7 is the rare upgrade worthy of its price premium over the iH5. We hope more's to come.



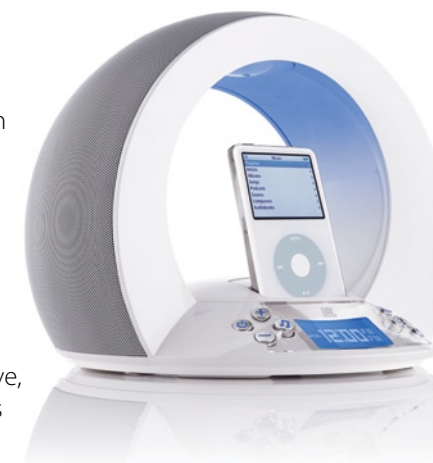
PRICE: \$150 Rating: A-
WWW.IHOMEAUDIO.COM

ILOUNGE
2006
BEST
CLOCK RADIO

Did you know? Every iPod except shuffle has an on-screen clock; recent models have multiple clocks for world time. Alarms will play iPod music through any speaker.

JBL On Time

We can't help but love On Time's design - as we've said many times before, this futuristic shrine to the iPod is one of the coolest speakers we've seen. With a relatively sophisticated dual-alarm clock radio system, capable of weekly, weekday, or weekend alarms, automatic time setting and light-sensitive screen dimming, the system sounds strong on paper. And in person - it has classical JBL sound quality (read: better than other products in its category), at least at average volumes. But its clock is on an odd, bed-unfriendly angle and it's expensive, especially given that it lacks a remote. Consider this a great office or tabletop clock with an iPod dock, and hunt for discounts.



PRICE: \$250 Rating: B+
WWW.JBL.COM

Memorex iWake

One of the least expensive but still quality clock alternatives we've seen is iWake, a very cleanly-designed unit with buttons flush around the top edges and a large, readable screen. Packaged with a remote control and available in black or white versions, it falls short of iH5 on AM radio quality, has a loud buzzing alarm, and a brightly backlit LCD, but makes up for these issues with a dual alarm like the \$150 iH7's and a nice Universal Dock at top. If you can live with its limits, it's great.



PRICE: \$80 Rating: B
MEMOREXELECTRONICS.COM

Three Key Facts About iPod Clocks

Don't expect premium sound. If you want lots of bass or high volume, go for a clock-less component system instead. These are small, bedside-ready speakers.

Be prepared for bright light. So far, the iPod clocks out there use dark numbers on bright backgrounds, which can cast beams in rooms if not dimmed.

iPod playback may vary. A bug in some iPod firmware causes wake-up playback to start at the beginning of your library - it's Apple's issue to fix, but annoying.

iHome iH5

The iPod's first true alarm clock remains amongst the strongest options available today. Like iH7 but \$50 less expensive, iH5 offers users AM/FM radio tuning, three types of wake-up options (buzzer, radio, and iPod), and sometimes - depending on where you buy it - a remote control. Some will find its front screen too bright, but for the price, it's the best overall balance of features and quality we've seen.



PRICE: \$100 Rating: A-
WWW.IHOMEAUDIO.COM

i-Luv i177

A bit larger and sleeker-looking than the iH5, the black- or white-colored i177 also packs an important extra feature: a dual alarm, which you'll only get if you step up to the iH7 (or down to the iWake), plus a guaranteed matching eight-button remote control in the box. In terms of audio quality, it's stronger in treble than in bass, where the iH5 and iH7 are both better-equipped, and roughly par for the clock radio course in overall sound, with very good AM/FM radio tuning.



PRICE: \$100 Rating: B+
WWW.I-LUV.COM

CARRY A TUNE, ANYWHERE PORTABLE SPEAKERS

Designed to be carried in a briefcase or small bag, these speakers trade off sound for size.



Logic3 i-Station7

A great portable speaker is measured by several characteristics: features, convenience, and sound quality for the price are three of them. At i-Station7's \$100 tag, there's no better portable iPod sound system anywhere: not only do you get a great remote control and a Universal iPod Dock capable of charging and computer synchronization, but you also get a very good 2-channel listening experience with a dedicated bass driver, providing low-end sound that's missing in many inexpensive iPod speakers. What's missing? Spend \$50 more on the mm50 (right) and you'll get better sound, a rechargeable internal battery, and carrying case, but i-Station7's included wall charger and optional AA battery compartments will do for most applications. As with most of its competitors, you can pick from white or black versions; a clear protective shield keeps the drivers safe while you travel.

PRICE: \$100 Rating: A-
WWW.LOGIC3.COM

I LOUNGE
2006
BEST
PORTABLE SPEAKER

Did you know? The first docking iPod travel speaker was Altec Lansing's inMotion, which folded up for flat packing and inspired most of the portables seen here.

Logitech mm50

If audio quality is a little more important to you than price - or if you're a careful shopper - Logitech's superb mm50 should be your first portable speaker pick. In addition to its included remote control, 10-hour rechargeable battery, and quality carrying case, the white or black mm50 delivers truly powerful, clean and nicely equalized sound for its size, aided by four medium-sized drivers and a spacializer button. The dock's simple, but it works.



PRICE: \$150 Rating: A-
WWW.LOGITECH.COM

Tivoli Audio iSongBook

The most premium of travel speakers is iSongBook, the only travel speaker we've seen with user-separable left and right speakers. Though the price is steep - twice that of the mm50 - you get an outstanding AM/FM radio with 5 presets, Universal iPod Dock, and backlit clock with alarm. Black and white versions are available, equally impressive visually and sonically; we use this model ourselves.



PRICE: \$300 Rating: B+
WWW.TIVOLIAUDIO.COM

The Why's and Why Not's of Portables

Why: Unlike most desktop speakers, they go anywhere. Battery power makes these easy travel companions, and they fit well into any home or office corner.

Why: They're simple. Every one has an iPod dock built in, and most include remote controls, so you don't need to buy anything else to fully enjoy your iPod.

Why not: Their sound. No matter what you pay for them, you'll always get better sound out of a comparably priced multi-component speaker. Always.

Sonic Impact i-P22

Convenience for the dollar is i-P22's strongest suit: though it lacks a remote and some of the frills of higher-end iPod speakers, Sonic Impact's \$90 design seamlessly blends a ballistic nylon carrying case with twin speaker drivers and a Universal iPod Dock. Like i-Station7, it includes a wall charger and the ability to run off four AA batteries - here for 24 hours - but it folds up small and travels very well.



PRICE: \$90 Rating: A-
WWW.SIS.COM



Ego Music Showcase

Available under at least two brand names, the Music Showcase is the only iPod-ready speaker that can be safely dropped into a pool. Read that again. A waterproof compartment in the center has sizers for any recent iPod but shuffle, and provides full interface

access via the Click Wheel. Though it's not meant to be submerged for extended periods, it will float on the water's surface, survive quick dunks and splashes, and yes, play competitively good-sounding music. Carrying straps, a stand, and bag are packed in, while four AA batteries provide 30 hours of power - there's no wall port.

PRICE: \$150 Rating: A-
WWW.E2ECH.COM

ALL-IN-ONE, ONE FOR ALL
BOOKSHELF SPEAKERS

2007 iPod Buyers' Guide

All-in-one speaker docks offer convenience,
typically at the expense of volume or bass.**Logitech AudioStation**

It's impossible to discuss the all-in-one bookshelf speaker category without referencing the system that started the craze: Bose's SoundDock. But Logitech's AudioStation has set out to bury Bose, and for now, succeeded. Packing substantially more powerful speakers, fully user-adjustable bass and treble controls, and an integrated AM/FM radio with a digital on-screen display, AudioStation basically has all the best features of its peers, and more. A touch-sensitive button panel in front illuminates when powered on, and turns off when powered down; the remote control provides access to all of the unit's integrated features and a variety of settings. The radio even displays RDS text information, such as artist and song details, if you want to see them. We'd even pick this one over Apple's more expensive iPod Hi-Fi any day; it's just that good.


PRICE: \$300 Rating: A
[WWW.LOGITECH.COM](http://www.logitech.com)
ILOUNGE
 2 0 0 6
 B E S T
 HOME SPEAKER

Why go Bookshelf? Multi-component speakers often force you to hide unsightly cables, and sometimes require the separate purchase of iPod docks and remotes.
Athena iVoice

If you like the SoundDock but don't want to spend \$300, Athena's soundlike iVoice should be a top pick. With highly similar automatic sound equalization, a matching, great remote control, and an even more slate-like design, iVoice works equally well on a table or when hung from a wall, its major distinctive design feature. It also offers a few options Bose omitted - an auxiliary audio input for non-iPod devices, plus video output and USB ports. Though it took two years, this proved the critics right: you can equal Bose for much less.


PRICE: \$200 Rating: A-
[ATHENATECHNOLOGIES.COM](http://athenatechnologies.com)
Kensington SX 3000R

We'll admit to being surprised by the quality and overall experience offered by SX 3000R, a flat panel speaker system that clearly was designed first to appeal to the eye, and then the ear. Refining its earlier SX2000 design, Kensington delivers an iconic all-in-one with on-iPod FM radio tuning, good bi-directional (front/rear) sound, and a nice remote control. It's not a sound superstar, but it's better than you'd guess - a balanced, affordable option.


PRICE: \$170 Rating: B+
[WWW.KENSINGTON.COM](http://www.kensington.com)
The Evolution of All-in-One Speakers

At first, a \$300 all-in-one speaker seemed insane. Who would pay that much for something with much lower sound quality than a 3-piece system?

Then it made sense. People were looking for simplicity, and female buyers liked the neutral look that Bose pioneered. Ten new SoundDock clones rapidly appeared.

Now, the tide's shifting. Tired of trying to duplicate SoundDose, companies are now playing with superior multi-piece designs and new features at better prices.

Bose SoundDock

Perhaps the single most popular iPod speaker system on the market is the SoundDock, now available in equally simple black or white versions. Placing your iPod in front of a large metal speaker grille, SoundDock produces rich, auto-equalized sound that is basically guaranteed to please average listeners without any need for adjustment. Bose offers none: other than volume buttons on the unit and iPod controls on the remote, all you need do is plug and play. Easy, but pricey given its audio quality, which iVoice handles for \$100 less. Pick it if you're brand-obsessed.


PRICE: \$299 Rating: B+
[WWW.BOSE.COM](http://www.bose.com)
Nyko Speaker Dock 2

Most of the all-in-one speakers we've liked are in the \$200 and up range, but Nyko's Speaker Dock 2 is different: available for as little as \$55 from major retailers, it combines a charging and syncing iPod dock with twin 1.5" speaker drivers, angled to provide as much stereo separation as something so small can offer. You can also plug a line input in to use it with a computer, and even run it off batteries, though its shape renders it less than truly portable for most purposes.


PRICE: \$130 Rating: A-
[WWW.NYKO.COM](http://www.nyko.com)

Need to live up a party? iPod boomboxes

2007 iPod Buyers' Guide

All-in-one designs made to be carried around and even used outdoors, with big batteries.



Altec Lansing iM7

In terms of looks and sound quality for the dollar, there's no iPod speaker we like as much as the inMotion iM7: careful shoppers will find it for considerably under its \$250 asking price. While it may not have the radio or great remote control of Logitech's AudioStation - iM7's remote is very weak - its integrated side-firing subwoofer and front-firing speaker drivers generate spectacular sound at all volumes except its peak, where systems like AudioStation and Apple's iPod Hi-Fi offer greater clarity. As a boombox, however, iM7 is lighter and transportable, capable of running off of eight D batteries for 8 to 10 hours; you will love its better-than-SoundDock sound. Altec sells a carrying harness and shoulder pack separately. The only other issue worth noting is its novel pop-out iPod dock, which fits large-sized iPods better than nanos, and doesn't work with cases or even InvisibleShields - a minor issue. Budget shoppers should start here.

PRICE: \$250 Rating: A-
www.alteclansing.com

What's the difference between a Boombox and a Bookshelf system? With rare exceptions, boomboxes trade off low-volume sound quality for high-volume power.

iLuv i552

If you're looking for a low-cost black or white iPod boombox, i552 is the way to go: it delivers better sound and comparable features to iHome's iH31, at a much better price. Both AM and FM radio tuning are supported - and sound pretty good - while the included dock and 15-foot remote control work well with the speakers to provide very good sound for the price. Eight C cells enable portability.



PRICE: \$90 Rating: A-
www.i-luv.com

MTX Audio iThunder

Car audio specialist MTX went for big-sound and bass with iThunder, a larger-than-average, seriously boxy design with four-inch drivers providing its audio. Though not a serious rival for the iM7 at high or low volumes, iThunder carries a lower sticker price and comes with a comparatively good remote control and pop-out carrying handle, which is useful and easy to compact down. Bassheads will like the sound, even if they notice distortion at its top volume; black and white versions are available, each with an wall adapter and eight C battery option.



PRICE: \$200 Rating: B
www.mtx.com/

Before You Go Boombox

Prepare for batteries. Most of these boomboxes eat eight Cs at a time, which will cost around \$10 per pack. Rechargeables will cost less over the long term.

Don't expect premium sound. Of these options, only iM7 bests the sound of all-in-one desktop systems we've tried; most are made for garage or outdoor enjoyment.

Consider the frills. Pack-ins vary a lot here - only one has a car charger, another has an AM radio, and one doesn't have a remote, but includes a full carrying case.

Altec Lansing iM9

There are two major reasons you might like the inMotion iM9 more than equal- and lower-priced options: sound quality and durability. Designed as a shock-resistant, go anywhere speaker - a major distinction - iM9 runs off four C cells or an included wall adapter, and includes a nice carrying backpack. Similarly, it sounds almost good enough to go toe-to-toe with the more expensive Bose SoundDock. But it lacks a remote control, has some amplifier hiss, and tends to blare out when first turned on - better outdoors than in.



PRICE: \$200 Rating: B+
www.alteclansing.com

iHome iH31

iH31 was pretty good when it was originally released as iH30, a same-looking speaker system with integrated FM radio, plastic shielded iPod and original shuffle docks, and both wall and car chargers in the box. Then iHome dropped the price by \$20 and threw in a 15-button Infrared remote control, complete with access to iH31's six FM preset stations. As with iThunder, the four-inch drivers inside aren't audiophile quality, but for the price and given its eight C-cell portability, it's a solid option with good sound, and now available in white, black or silver.



PRICE: \$130 Rating: B+
www.ihomeaudio.com

Set 'em up, leave 'em Component Systems

2007 iPod Buyers' Guide

Multi-component speakers can't easily be carried, but offer great sound for the price.

Monitor Audio i-deck

Available in white or black, i-deck was worthy of the U.K. company's name when the British audio specialists sold it for \$250; it's almost a steal now that it's commonly available cheaper. Alongside a central dock, its satellites each pack 3/4" and 4" drivers for nearly full-spectrum sound, with user-tweakable imaging and a default, unadjustable sound signature that will satisfy all but the most bass-obsessed listeners, as there's no subwoofer. The RF remote works from 50-foot distances, and the system plays loud and clear enough to use them. Though Monitor has a cheaper "compact" version and a more expensive "plus" version with an integrated radio and several other tweaks, the original has virtually all the best features - the right sound and right features at the right price. It was the best multi-component system this year, though it remains to be seen whether it will be available for purchase throughout 2007 once i-deck plus is widely available.

PRICE: \$250 Rating: A-
www.i-deckusa.com



Did you know? Prior to Altec Lansing's inMotion, stores sold two types of iPod-ready speakers - pocket portables, and component multimedia speakers like these.

iHome iH52

As multi-component speakers go, iH52 is a solid-sounding, smart first stab at a completely integrated iPod and multimedia system. What little you trade off in sound quality is made up for by iH52's interesting feature set and generally reasonable pricing: in one enclosure, iHome has combined a Universal iPod Dock, digital clock and very good AM/FM radio, controlled by a decent RF remote control and linked via cables to two twin-driver satellite speakers and a 7.5" right-firing subwoofer. iPod track data can be shifted to the unit's integrated display at the cost of on-iPod navigation.

PRICE: \$200 Rating: B+
www.ihomeaudio.com



iLive Home Docking System

It's not that the Home Docking System (aka IHMD8816DT) is an amazing multi-component speaker system, or a complete iPod video dock with remote, or a fully functioned Samsung DVD player and AM/FM radio with a clock - no alarms - it's that it does all of these things, and pretty well. The two large speaker cabinets include side-firing subwoofers and front-firing drivers, separating from the combination iPod dock and DVD player for placement alongside a TV or anywhere else in the room. Though the audio quality isn't phenomenal, it's good enough to satisfy virtually anyone given the price and extras.

PRICE: \$160 Rating: B
www.ilive.net



Whither Multi-Component Audio?

Better sound for the dollar. Shoving tons of speakers into a single box limits stereo separation and often forces bass and treble compromises. Not an issue here.

More cables. Because these systems separate satellite speakers from their bassy subwoofers and iPod docks, you'll need to place the parts and hide the wires away.

You may need to buy a dock. Many of the best multi-piece values don't come with an iPod dock - Kensington's oft-discounted Stereo Dock is a great pick.

JBL Creature II

For the price - commonly below \$70 - there's no better-sounding, iPod-matching speaker than JBL's Creature II. Period. Long a favorite of iLounge's editors and readers, Creature was released before the wave of iPod speaker inflation began, and delivers a great combination of clean highs and rich lows, thanks to its separate subwoofer and fully user-tweakable treble and bass knobs. You'll need to supply your own dock, but will be glad you did.



PRICE: \$100 Rating: A
www.jbl.com

JBL Spot

It suffices to say that we're no longer surprised when JBL releases a completely outside the box speaker system design. The company's latest innovation, Spot, is the first skinnable speaker system we've seen, packaged with two sets of colored shells (white and black) for each of the included three speakers. The half globe satellites and subwoofer rise above table level with chrome metal rings, and no matter which shells go onto the speakers, their classy metal grilles and volume controls stick out. JBL intends to offer shells designed by mainstream and tattoo artists, but even if they didn't, the included sets are iPod-matching. Note: there's no iPod dock, and you'll pay a design premium. This is a sub-Creature II quality system at its peak, and lacks treble control.



PRICE: \$130 Rating: B+
www.jbl.com

CHEAP, LITTLE LISTENING POCKET SPEAKERS

2007 iPod Buyers' Guide

Need a pocket-sized way to play your music for three people, minus bass? Look here.

Pacific Rim Cube

Pocket-sized speakers aren't supposed to sound great, but as these low-cost, low-profile designs go, Pacific Rim's Cube Travel Speakers - not the numerous imitations out there - are tops on value. For the price, you get the flip-open, two-speaker cube, a wall power adapter, and separate trays to hold full-sized iPods, minis, and nanos. A compartment in the back takes four AAA batteries for around 16 hours of run time, though battery life varies based on how high you set the volume level. Sound quality is a major step up over smaller speakers such as IP-A111 and PocketParty, with only one tradeoff: the Cube will fill a big pocket rather than fit with an iPod inside a small one. Play them at reasonable volumes and you'll be impressed by their sound and longevity.

PRICE: \$20 RATING: A-
PACRIMTECHNOLOGIES.COM

Though we refer to all of these as "pocket" speakers, be careful - the right-side options easily snap off their headphone port plugs, especially if pocketed with iPods.

Macally IP-A111

As the granddaddy of the iPod pocket speaker genre, Macally's IP-A111 (formerly PodWave) is still a great little option today - with clean sound given its size - if you're willing to accept a couple of tradeoffs. One AA battery provides power for 8 hours of play time, sticking into the headphone port of any iPod model you may have. Because the plug is centrally located on the speaker tube, it'll hang off the edge of all iPods save 3G and 4G models. Wall adapters aren't supported or included.

PRICE: \$30 RATING: A-
WWW.MACALLY.COM



Gear4 PocketParty for iPod nano

What we like most about PocketParty for iPod nano - a near soundlike to Macally's previously-released and more iPod agnostic IP-A111 - is that Gear4 took the opportunity to turn this functional, super-portable little speaker into a nice little iPod nano stand. Available in black or white, this version of PocketParty allows user volume adjustment via the nano's headphone port - a major feature missing from the company's 5G-compatible edition - and props up the nano's screen for easy viewing. One AA battery provides up to 10 hours of audio - again, wall adapters aren't supported or included.

PRICE: \$45 RATING: A-
WWW.GEAR4.COM



Pocket-Sized Tradeoffs

Expect only decent sound. The major benefit here is convenience of size, which necessarily limits volume, bass resonance, and detail. Docking portables are better.

The same dollars could go towards bigger portable speakers. With several foldaway speakers at \$100 or less, you may find your dollars better applied elsewhere.

Unrivaled portability, cheap. If you're trying to conserve space in a travel bag, pocket speakers provide your single best option, and generally aren't too pricey.

ETYMOTIC RESEARCH

Wireless
High Definition
Noise-Isolating
Earphones

ety8.com

Bluetooth

ATTENTION-GRABBING AUDIO FOCAL POINT SPEAKERS

If looks or location are your biggest needs, these speakers will stand out from the pack.

2007 iPod Buyers' Guide

Geneva Lab L, XL

Two of the best-sounding iPod-docking speaker systems we've ever heard come from Geneva Lab, a Swiss developer that focused on two things: huge enclosures and huge sound. The smaller Model L (\$599) is bigger, better, and cooler-looking than Apple's meaty iPod Hi-Fi, delivering sound that impossibly seems much larger than the enclosure. But Model XL (\$1075) is the beast, an 84-pound wood cabinet with 600 watts of amplification, capable of creating the audio equivalent of an alternate reality in front of you - a wall of theater-quality sound that adds room-rattling bass to L's formula. Available in lacquered white, red, or black, both systems penny-pinch a bit on frills - the stands are extra and neither has the optical input you'll want for a DVD or AirPort Express connection - but they have radios and CD players inside. If you have the cash for the speaker, get a stand too; people will be agog.

PRICE: \$599+ Rating: B+
www.genevalab.com

The speakers shown in this section aren't the best values we've ever seen, but they've made unforgettable impressions amidst hundreds of all-too-familiar options.

mStation 2.1 Stereo Tower

Last year, Ignitek released iCarrier, the first pillar-like iPod stereo system, and now mStation is selling the 2.1 Stereo Tower, a similarly gargantuan silver and black set of tubular speakers. The left and right channel drivers are found in the top tubes next to the iPod, and can be positioned outwards, while a down-firing subwoofer delivers incredible bass. It's not the cleanest-sounding system for its asking price, but it is the biggest.

PRICE: \$300 Rating: B
www.mstation.com

mStation Orb

mStation excels at releasing interesting fusions of design and sound; the 2001: A Space Odyssey-inspired Orb is its most affordable creation. Now available in six colors, Orb packs two midrange drivers and a subwoofer into its frame, allowing the sub's bass to fire forwards and backwards from the globe. Sound quality is good for a unit of its size and price, and there's a 10-button remote, sync-ready USB cable, and wall adapter included in each package. Battery-powered playback isn't supported, but the 7.8 diameter and top-loading dock make it convenient to drop and use anywhere indoors.

PRICE: \$150 Rating: B
www.mstation.com

The Truth About iPod Speakers

Marketing hype can be aggressive and phony. Too many companies claim to sell audiophile-quality, room-filling speakers. You really need to listen for yourself.

There are too many of them. Lots of companies are trying to make quick bucks on low-performance or low-quality iPod speakers. Many are generic designs.

There are good and bad options at every price level. Resist the temptation to decide on price alone. Read reviews to get a good value for the dollar.



iHome iH36 Under-the-Cabinet Stereo System

Sharing technology with iHome's larger and more expensive multi-component system iH52, the iH36 is designed for a very specific application: under-cabinet mounting. Rather than having a speaker system take up precious kitchen counter space, iH36 hangs under virtually any wooden cabinet, using angled down-firing speakers and a retractable iPod dock to reduce clutter - it also picks up FM and over-the-air TV stations. A decent remote's included to control the unit from afar, and like iH52, iH36 can transform its built-in clock into a large, readable 3-line display for iPod track, artist, and album details. Though the same dollars could buy a pretty good set of countertop or component iPod speakers, iH36's convenience in a cramped kitchen is undoubtable, and it's a unique way to show your love for the iPod.

PRICE: \$150 Rating: B
www.ihomeaudio.com

Listen to FM on the go FM Radio Tuners

Tired of listening to your own collection of tracks? Add a radio tuner - for a pretty penny.

Apple iPod Radio Remote

Apple wasn't the first company to release a radio tuner for the iPod, but so far, its feature set is the best. Combining an iPod shuffle-like wired remote control with a pair of specially shortened cord-length, old-fashioned official iPod Earphones, the iPod Radio Remote plugs into a 5G iPod or nano's bottom port, enabling you to tune U.S., European, or Japanese stations at will with a simple on-screen radio dial. The killer features are a super-simple preset system, which creates arrowheads on the dial for easy access, and relatively clean, good-sounding audio for a portable FM tuner. There's also a shirt clip on the rear to let you have full access to the five-button remote at any time. On the other hand, the RDS text display feature doesn't work quite as well as we'd hope - sometimes it displays strings of station, artist, and track information, sometimes it doesn't - and the price isn't cheap for something as simple as a radio remote, given that Griffin does pretty much the same thing with the lower-priced iFM, which also works on pre-5G and nano iPods - Apple's doesn't. Ultimately Apple has the edge here because of its proprietary interface; hopefully others will use it in the future.

Price: \$49 Rating: A-
www.apple.com

What's the gold standard for an iPod FM radio accessory? See our old review of Griffin's original iFM - you could record live radio, listen right away, and sync to iTunes.

Griffin iFM (Dock Connector)

Before there was an iPod Radio Remote, there was the black iFM shown here, and before the black iFM was a silver version for fourth-generation iPods that rated a flat A overall. That first iFM boasted the abilities to tune FM radio stations, serve as a remote control, record live FM radio, and even record live voices with an anemic built-in microphone, the latter feature its only mild disappointment. Designed for the 5G iPod and nano - but compatible with earlier models, as well - the new iFM was stripped down: it can't record anything any more, but it still tunes FM radio stations and works as an able remote, using buttons and a hold switch on its face and sides, attaching to your clothes with a metal clip. The tuning's very comparable to the iPod Radio Remote - minus the cool on-iPod interface, RDS feature, and simple presets. Given all the feature differences, why only the mild difference in ratings? Unlike Apple's Radio Remote, Griffin's can be had for \$30 if you shop around - the best priced radio tuner we've seen.

Price: \$50 Rating: B+
griffintechnology.com

Top Questions on FM Radio Receivers

Why doesn't it tune AM radio? Good AM antennas are too big to fit in add-ons, so the experience would be disappointing. Even good FM tuning is a challenge.

Why do I need to keep earphones attached? In order to create a big enough FM antenna for decent reception, all of these add-ons use earphones as antennas.

How do these things really sound? FM reception is always sketchy in homes and portable devices, but you'll hear pretty clean audio from the top add-ons.

DLO nanoTune

We're not covering lots of accessories for the discontinued original iPod nano in this Guide, but nanoTune stands out because of what it represents: an attempt to merge a case, FM radio tuner, FM transmitter and a headphone port amplifier into one super accessory. Though the transmitter and amplifier aren't big selling points, nanoTune's radio delivers very low static but somewhat bass-heavy audio, and the case works well closed, or open as a stand.

Price: \$70 Rating: B-
www.dlo.com

Kensington Digital FM Radio & FM Transmitter

Tipping the scales at a \$80 suggested price, Kensington's Digital FM Radio & FM Transmitter blends two accessories into a single shell, and actually does a good job with both. Though the FM transmitter is the stronger part of the package, delivering surprisingly powerful audio for a portable, the radio receiver is above-average, with good treble detail and a low (but not optimal) level of static. Careful shopping will net it for under \$55.

Price: \$80 Rating: B+
www.kensington.com

RECORD MUSIC AND VOICES AUDIO RECORDERS

CD-quality audio recording is now here for iPod and aluminum nano owners, at a price.

XtremeMac MicroMemo

A great iPod recording accessory needs at least two things: something to record, and something to let you instantly hear what's just been recorded. Today, MicroMemo is the only recorder that has both: in addition to including a detachable omnidirectional microphone, which can be turned and bent in any direction you prefer, XtremeMac's bottom-attaching accessory has a built-in speaker that lets you clearly hear the iPod's rendition of whatever conversation, music, or lecture you were recording. Better yet, the recordings sound really good: whether you've connected a CD player to rip tunes on the go, or you're using the mic to create a memo of a class lecture, the fidelity is impressive - a massive improvement over last year's top-connecting voice recorders. MicroMemo works, and well, with both 5G iPods and 2G nanos.

PRICE: \$60 RATING: A-
WWW.XTREMEMAC.COM

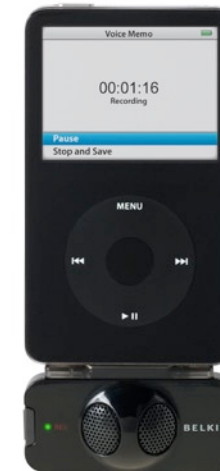


Thinking of recording with the new iPod nano? Great news: these add-ons run longer than on 5Gs, even if they look a bit funny. Just don't run out of space - it's easy.

Belkin TuneTalk Stereo

First shown back in January of this year, TuneTalk Stereo caught our attention with a cool twin-microphone design that wonderfully matched then-new 5G iPods, and surpassed our expectations by appearing in final form with a detachable iPod recording stand and a USB cable for simultaneous recording and charging. The latter feature - unique to TuneTalk Stereo - makes it the best choice for users who want to record continuously for many hours, as the 5G iPod's battery will give out after 2-6 hours, depending on model. But Belkin's design lacks an integrated speaker, and its two internal mics are arguably overkill given their proximity and location. Serious recorder users will also want a cabled mic and speaker, which will add to the cost of this already expensive little add-on.

PRICE: \$70 RATING: B+
WWW.BELKIN.COM



Griffin iTalkPro

How times have changed: last year, Griffin's iTalk was the world's best iPod voice recorder, offering the same key features now found in XtremeMac's MicroMemo at an even lower price. But besides capitalizing on the 5G iPod's higher-quality recording feature with a second built-in microphone, there's nothing really Pro about this iTalk - it's missing MicroMemo's integrated speaker and TuneTalk's pass-through USB port, a much more limited design. It does have an on-iPod menu to turn on its digital autogain feature, though you'll find recordings a bit less impressive than its competitors. Its key benefit: it's the least expensive 5G/nano recorder out there.

PRICE: \$50 RATING: B
GRIFFINTECHNOLOGY.COM

Before You Record

iPods record in WAV format. This old format uses 2.6-10.3 Megs per minute of recording, based on quality.

You'll need iTunes. Once the iPod's done recording, iTunes can convert files into smaller MP3 or AAC formats.

The iLounge Library

Own an older iPod? Need help using your current or past iPod model? Download our past Buyers' Guides and The Free iPod Book 2.2.



iLounge.com/Library

Official iLounge t-shirts

The first 1000 customers save 20%.
Use coupon code **zym8s22h** at Store.iLounge.com.



LIKE TO SING ALONG? KARAOKE ACCESSORIES

From amateur-to professional-ready, these add-ons let you participate in your tunes.

Griffin iKaraoke

If you understand the concept of karaoke - generally embarrassing, but fun public singalongs to famous songs - Griffin's just-released iKaraoke will make sense to you. At first blush, you'll notice that the microphone and automatic on-screen iPod software are unique in that they work with any track already on your iPod, and instead of requiring you to use the line-out port, iKaraoke has a built-in FM transmitter that lets you sing through any nearby FM radio - all cool features that merited our Accessory Innovation of the Year award. The good news is that these features all work, and provide a less expensive overall experience than competing options; Griffin's vocal filters remove as much of the original song's voice track as possible, and enhance yours with echo as much as you want. But don't expect perfect voice filtering - some tracks won't work well - and you'll need to add lyrics to songs on your own. For the price, it's a good start, and a cool little gadget.



PRICE: \$50 RATING: B
GRIFFINTECHNOLOGY.COM



Did you know? Karaoke was invented in a bar in Kobe, Japan in 1971. Since then, it has become an estimated \$7-billion industry, thriving in public watering holes.

CAVS Karaoke Station IPS-11G

As the first actually released iPod karaoke system, CAVS' IPS-11G is also the most complex. Selling for a price that's almost strictly for drinking establishments or karaoke obsessives - but apparently discounted to \$159 starting on November 1 through the holidays - it's the only iPod karaoke system to include its own charging dock and remote control, and connects to a TV-equipped AV system to provide on-screen singalong lyrics and song choices. As with the doPi system, the microphone's ample for one-person singing, given extra vocal weight by an integrated echo feature, and a second mic can be plugged into the dock for fun-filled renditions of Islands in the Stream - or whichever of the 200 included sample songs you'd prefer to join in on. Better yet, anyone with an iPod can bring songs to the dock, letting you build your own playlist at home and carry it along. Unfortunately, you'll need to pay \$1-2 per track for CAVS-compatible music, all of which uses no-name singers, and the interface is a bit buggy, with some issues that may confound novice users.



PRICE: \$229 RATING: B-
WWW.IPSKARAOKE.COM

To Buy or Not to Buy: Karaoke Wisdom

Will there be other options? We knew about iKaraoke a year ahead of time, and we haven't heard much about additional karaoke systems, so these might be it.

doPi Karaoke

Halfway between Griffin's and CAVS' karaoke solutions is doPi Karaoke, a \$60 package that - like IPS-11G - includes a large solo mic, a mixing box with dual microphone inputs and an echo filter, and the ability to output on-screen lyrics to a television set. But the difference is that doPi (iPod in reverse) allows you to see the lyrics on the iPod's own screen if you want, using MPEG-4 video files to handle all of the music and singalong text. As you might have guessed, that means you'll need to download videos from doPi's web site to use with the iPod, and they'll cost \$1.99 a piece, compounded by the relative scarcity of video-formatted tracks in the company's library. On the bright side, the massive price difference between this and the Karaoke Station's regular pricing will buy you more than 80 tracks of your choice, and you'll get three free downloads with the unit. doPi also includes the audio and video cables you'll need to connect your iPod to the unit, and the unit to a TV.



PRICE: \$60 RATING: B
WWW.DOPIKARAOKE.COM

Do you want to build a new library? Unless you use iKaraoke, prepare to spend money building a collection of tracks capable of working with these devices.

Does the iPod really help? Maybe not. Carrying your favorite singalongs is a great idea, but these aren't decidedly better than CD-based karaoke machines.

CAR RADIO, MEET JUKEBOX FM Transmitters (car)



Belkin TuneBase FM for iPod

In 2006, Belkin turned the FM transmitter category on its head by aggressively pricing two different iPod accessories: one of them is TuneBase FM for iPod. As a sequel to a previously developed iPod mini accessory of the same name, TransPod FM evolves the prior concept - and DLO's TransPod FM - in almost every conceivable way: it features an iPod dock with inserts specifically sized to all iPod models, strong, rich-sounding on-iPod FM transmitter tuning with four presets and iPod model-specific audio adjustments, and a flexible gooseneck pipe that lets you position the iPod on your choice of angles. Despite its excellence across most of its features, there were three issues that prevented TuneBase FM from receiving our highest recommendation: unlike TransPod, there's no line-out feature for use with cassette adapters or direct line-in ports on new car stereos; the gooseneck's one of the smallest we've seen, so the iPod can't get as high as you may prefer; and well, Belkin sells a little something called TuneFM that offers most of the same functionality for an even lower price. These issues aside, if you want strong FM transmission with an integrated charging mount, don't think twice - this is the best option for those features at this price.

PRICE: \$80 Rating: B+
www.belkin.com

If your car stereo doesn't have a better way to connect an iPod, here are some good options.

2007 iPod Buyers' Guide

Did you know? iLounge has an FM Transmitter Shootout online with more detailed comparisons of audio quality and static performance for top transmitter options.

Kensington Digital FM Transmitter/ Auto Charger

When Kensington's Digital FM Transmitter/Auto Charger first appeared, it was only a little shy of miraculous: the glossy white combination transmitter and iPod charger delivered dynamic, powerful sound and a lower than average static level. Now also available in black, the Charger still has all of these great features, and a more reasonable \$50 street price, besides. But its top competitors from Belkin and Griffin have gotten better over the past year, and now rival its sound and static performance under certain circumstances - Griffin's iTrip Auto lacks mostly in the preset department, and Belkin's TuneFM does even more for less. Still a great option, pick it if you don't want on-iPod screen tuning.



PRICE: \$80 Rating: A+
www.kensington.com

Monster iCarPlay Wireless 200

We're legitimately impressed: iCarPlay Wireless 200 has a simplifying technology that can make virtually anyone a satisfied FM transmitter user. Hold the big silver button in the middle of the transmitter and an Autoscan screen will appear on your iPod, while iCarPlay searches every radio station from 88.1FM to 107.9FM for the clearest possible station for broadcasting. Other than being unable to tune 87.9FM, this works really well, leaving you only to deal with the \$100 price tag and not-quite Kensington/Belkin static level, which is close to great but not quite, even on directly competing stations. A good option if tuning is a struggle.



PRICE: \$100 Rating: B
www.monstercable.com

In-Car Transmitter Shopping Surprises

Street prices are much, much lower. Shop at Best Buy and you can expect to pay full sticker or more; shop online to save 30-50% off FM transmitter prices.

Mounting affects a lot. The location of the transmitter relative to your car's radio and antenna can really change audio quality and tuner access on some models.

Station choice is critical. Unless you're in San Francisco or two smaller U.S. cities, 87.9FM is a top broadcasting choice for clarity; only some transmitters support it.

Griffin iTrip Auto

Hybrid iPod FM transmitters and car chargers are expensive, but Griffin's iTrip Auto has one major advantage over competitors: its online price is around half of its \$70 sticker. Combining strong FM transmission with a small, simple charging bulb, iTrip Auto delivers low static levels and powerful audio, tuning easily to frequently empty station 87.9. The in-line, backlit transmitter box is easy to read, if sometimes awkward to tune during a drive, and the lack of mounting hardware will be an advantage or disadvantage, depending on the user. The only caveat: no presets. With 87.9 available for tuning, however, you mightn't need them.



PRICE: \$70 Rating: B+
griffintechnology.com

DLO TransPod FM

Sold at an initially gulp-inducing \$100 price, the TransPod (aka TransDock) FM combines an iPod dock with an FM transmitter, charger, mount, and line-out capabilities. Though not physically ideal for the shapes of today's iPods, the cradle works, and the FM transmitter is good, not spectacular, by the standards of top options we've tested. Similarly, the mounting hardware is a generation behind goosenecks such as TuneBase FM, using plastic pipes that can be tough to mount in some cars. so buy from a store that lets you test its fit in your vehicle; return's always an option if it doesn't.



PRICE: \$100 Rating: B
www.dlo.com

ANY RADIO, IPOD-READY POCKET FM TRANSMITTERS



Most of these portable FM transmitters trade off sound quality and drain iPod batteries.

Belkin TuneFM

We weren't expecting that Belkin would be the company to release our FM Transmitter of the Year: the category previously was dominated by Griffin and Kensington. But TuneFM did two key things that stand out this year: it matched the sound quality and low-static performance of its competitors, and did so at an impressively aggressive price. Each package includes the bottom-mounting transmitter - designed to be compatible with open-bottomed iPod cases - and a complete car charger, a surprise that renders TuneFM even more fully featured than Kensington's Digital FM Transmitter and Auto Charger, with the option to go portable if you need it. Belkin's only design limitations here are arguably minor: its on-iPod interface is almost comically bare, and the transmitter is maximized for near-antenna performance, so there are some cars in which Kensington and other options might do better. Given the price and quality here, however, we'd recommend that TuneFM be the first transmitter you try.

PRICE: \$50 RATING: A-
WWW.BELKIN.COM

ILOUNGE
2006
BEST
FM TRANSMITTER

Did you know? Until on-iPod tuning was pioneered, FM transmitters needed their own screens or used buttons to toggle between a handful of limited stations.

Kensington Pico

If size is of critical importance when you're buying an FM transmitter, the clear winner is Pico, Kensington's very-close-to-iPod nano-matching add-on that tosses aside frills for compactness. Like several other transmitters, Pico's FM radio station tuning is handled entirely on the iPod's screen, here using a rocker switch found on the accessory's right side, and there are two presets to select from. But unlike most of its competitors, Pico has no pass-through charging port for the iPod, so it drains the battery without providing any alternative, and doesn't benefit from the broadcasting power boost add-on cables can provide. It's a solid, small, pretty good option.

PRICE: \$50 RATING: B
WWW.KENSINGTON.COM



XtremeMac AirPlay²

The "super-small" FM transmitter contest started with XtremeMac's release of AirPlay², a thin, square attachment originally designed for the iPod nano. For that iPod, it's a cool little add-on, with a central blue tuning screen and buttons flush with its front face surface. A Dock Connector pass-through port on the bottom lets you keep your iPod charged while it's in use, too, a good thing given its fairly aggressive battery drain. Though fifth-generation iPod users won't find it as enchanting - it's a little less stable than we'd hoped when connected - it outperformed Griffin's iTrip on a number of tests, with a pretty low static level and good sound.

PRICE: \$50 RATING: B/C+
WWW.XTREMEMAC.COM

FM Transmitter Reality Check

Spend lots, get static. Transmitters are required to pipe iPod music into older car stereos, costing 2-10 times tape adapter or line-in cable prices, and sound worse.

There are major differences between brands. Cheap transmitters are far more likely to disappoint than the ones shown here; newer models do better, too.

Portability: pros and cons. If you don't need transmission outside of your car, consider in-car options. But TuneFM offers a good compromise and price.

Griffin iTrip (Dock Connector)

It wouldn't be a Buyers' Guide without iTrip, perhaps the best-known FM transmitter series for iPods, and certainly one of the most popular. Though this iteration isn't Griffin's best work - it's sleek but not cutting-edge, and uses a Pico-like rocker for uneasy tuning - it still does a better job than earlier versions when tuned to an empty station, with more dynamic range. But you'll pay as much as you would for TuneFM, and get less in the box; thankfully USB charging is permitted. iTrip for the original iPod nano was better.

PRICE: \$50 RATING: B-
GRIFFINTECHNOLOGY.COM



ABT iJet for iPod nano

There's only one FM transmitter we wanted to feature in this section for the now-discontinued first-gen iPod nano, and that's iJet, which like DLO's nanoTune fuses an FM transmitter into a full nano case, then adds a 50-foot RF remote control to the package. While not cheap by FM transmitter standards, iJet is the first remote controllable transmitter we've seen, and did a very good job on open FM stations - comparable to Belkin's TuneFM, and much better than nanoTune. The Dock Connector on bottom lets you use it with chargers and - minus volume control - speaker systems, too.

PRICE: \$70 RATING: A-
WWW.ABTECH2.COM



DUST OFF THE TAPE DECK! CASSETTE ADAPTERS



Sony CPA-9C

For several years, we've listed the CPA-9C as our top cassette tape adapter - not just because there's been no attempt to surpass its sound quality, but also because its price was hard to beat. Though the PH2050W has a slight edge on versatility and pricing - the latter depending on where you shop - the CPA-9C remains a highly compatible, very high quality cassette tape adapter, delivering equally clean sound and dynamic range to the Philips design. It's also done well in longevity testing, continuing to work reliably for years - all of these features steps above some other brands we've tested. It's not our top pick anymore, but try it if the Philips doesn't work in your car, or is hard to find.

PRICE: \$20 Rating: B+
WWW.SONYSTYLE.COM



Philips PH2050W

Available at Wal-mart for slightly under \$10, Philips PH2050W is the best standard cassette adapter we've seen. Using a unique screw-open top that allows its headphone port cable to dangle from either its top or side - a feature that offers greater compatibility with various tape decks - the PH2050W connects to your iPod with ease and sounds every bit as good as the CPA-9C. In other words, it's cheap, and offers better-than-FM transmitter sound quality, so long as you have a tape deck.

PRICE: \$10 Rating: A-
WWW.PHILIPS.COM

If your car has a cassette tape player, these solutions will deliver better sound than radio.

2007 iPod Buyers' Guide

Belkin TuneDeck for iPod nano

Few companies have made any effort to radically improve the standard cassette adapter, but Belkin's TuneDeck for iPod nano is an exception - a tape adapter with a fully integrated iPod nano dock and detachable power charger. The complete system sounds great and works as promised, with two caveats: it mounts low, and works only with first-gen nanos. It deserves an update.



PRICE: \$50 Rating: A-
WWW.BELKIN.COM

Only one other accessory maker tried to create a better cassette adapter - Griffin's SmartDeck promised to let users control the iPod with existing stereo buttons.

DRIVE, CHARGE, LISTEN IPOD CAR AUDIO KITS

2007 iPod Buyers' Guide

If you're trying to find a great wired solution for iPod-to-car stereo connections, look here.

Belkin Auto Kit for iPod

We call it "old reliable." Belkin's Auto Kit was one of the earliest iPod car accessories, and it's still one of the best, especially if you have a cassette tape deck and adapter in your car. Auto Kit supplies iPod power and audio-out, but unlike imp, it lets you set the level of the iPod output with a knob, which is typically done only once and lets you maximize audio quality with your car's stereo. A great, useful buy.



PRICE: \$40 Rating: B+
WWW.BELKIN.COM

SiK imp

If your car has a line-in port, but no iPod connectivity, imp is one of the best solutions out there. Like Auto Kit, it charges your iPod and provides audio output, but here, the output is line-level at maximum volume, just as it should be for cars with line inputs. Though imp could stand to have a bit of cosmetic surgery after several years, it does its two jobs well for a price that's hard to beat.



PRICE: \$30 Rating: B+
WWW.SIK.COM

On Premium Auto Kits

In our Free iPod Book 2.2, you can find all sorts of information about premium aftermarket auto kits that have been released for the iPod - solutions that typically sell for \$100 and up, not including the cost of necessary professional installation.

After serious consideration, the editors of iLounge have opted not to recommend any of these kits in this year's Buyers' Guide, as we have become increasingly dismayed by their poor iPod navigation interfaces, frequently absurd prices, and other issues that conspire to make in-car iPod use less than ideal. As companies have failed to beat or even come close to Apple's own iPod interface, our belief is that an Apple-developed on-TV/on-car monitor menu standard is needed, now.

Throughout 2007, we will be looking for integration systems that provide responsive, easy access to the iPod's music and/or video libraries, and deliver the sort of audio quality that consumers should expect for premium prices.

What's the difference between a stand and a dock? Electronics. Stands are holders, while docks include parts that interface with your iPod's bottom connector.

KEEP YOUR IPOD VISIBLE CAR MOUNTS & MORE

2007 iPod Buyers' Guide

If you want to access your iPod's screen and controls while in the car, here's where to start.

TEN Technology flexibleDock

We consider it to be one of the most aggressive car accessories of all time - the thick-stalked flexibleDock gooseneck for the first time enabled any Dock Connecting iPod, full-sized or otherwise, to be mounted, charged, and have audio drawn from its higher-quality bottom port. And it did so at a reasonable price, besides. To this day, we think it's one of the very best car accessories you can buy if you need its three features: the flexible, metal-based gooseneck mounts especially well in most cars' power ports.

PRICE: \$50 RATING: A
tenttechnology.com



Nyko Universal Car Mount

We're not huge fans of clip-on air vent mounts for iPods, but Nyko's Universal Car Mount comes as close to greatness as we've seen. Though designed for earlier iPods and minis, the mount's spring-loaded clamps and largely clear design work with any iPod save the nanos, providing access to the top and bottom ports for audio and charging. Best of all, the Mount is commonly sold for \$10, a great deal.

PRICE: \$10 RATING: A-
www.nyko.com



ProClip Padded Adjustable Mount

On the flip side of Nyko's UCM is ProClip's series of deluxe, car-specific mounts, led by the spectacular Padded Adjustable Mount. Sold in two pieces, these black brackets are sized specifically to your car and type of iPod, increasing in width to accommodate the iPod while still inside popular cases. We've yet to see a better, more practical solution to accommodate the needs of encased iPod users, though ProClip's series of more expensive, non-adjustable Cable Attachment holders are also worthwhile, conveniently holding a charger at the ready for one-step connection.

PRICE: \$60 RATING: A
www.proclipusa.com



Griffin TuneFlex 5G

Very close to flexibleDock in overall design and functionality, TuneFlex also includes a cassette tape adapter, which unfortunately grinds a lot and should be replaced. TuneFlex also has a cool ring of light at its base, which changes based on iPod 5G charge status, but lacks for one major flexibleDock feature, namely universal iPod compatibility. It's still a nice option.

PRICE: \$50 RATING: B+
griffintechnology.com



What do iLounge's editors use? We put our money where our mouths are: our top-rated products are ones that we actually do and would keep in our own vehicles.

Do you suffer from **OCD?** *commonly known as* **OBSESSIVE CASE DISORDER**

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BUILT IN SCREEN PROTECTOR TO COMBAT DAILY ABUSE
ADDITIONAL FILM INCLUDED FOR THOSE WITH ADVANCED OCD

Core Cases recommends consulting the iLounge forums before starting this or any other daily treatment

CORE CASES
Available at
www.corecases.com



Unique.

2 collections, 6 styles
3 leather finishes, 70 colours.
Over 1600 possible combinations
for your iPod.



Just like you.

Add personality at vajachoice.com

MOVIES, maybe MENUS, ON TV IPOD VIDEO DOCKS

If you want a premium way to connect your iPod to a home AV system or TV, look here.



Griffin TuneCenter

The original idea was great: a \$100 iPod dock with the ability to display iPod music menus, photos, and videos on any TV screen, plus a remote control, and a wireless 802.11 card to let you stream Internet Radio from your existing home network. Regrettably, the final version of TuneCenter added \$30 to that price and fell short on features: lacking a wireless card, it can only connect to the Internet via a long wire from a router, and though functional, its on-screen menus and radio tuner aren't great. We loved its look, and with an included power supply, AV cable, and decent IR remote, it will satisfy some users, but audiophiles won't find its sound ideal and everyone would benefit from a better interface. Griffin promises a firmware interface update will remedy some of these concerns and make TuneCenter better. We're waiting.

PRICE: \$130 Rating: B
[GRIFFINTECHNOLOGY.COM](http://griffintechnology.com)



DLO HomeDock Deluxe

Cool-looking iPod dock and remote? Check. On-TV display of iPod music menus, photos, and videos? Check. Price? In our view, crazy. If HomeDock Deluxe had been released for \$100, it might have been our Video Dock of the Year, adding one nice feature (DLO's simple but clean-looking on-TV rendition of iPod menus) to a general concept we've seen many times before. But like Griffin's TuneCenter, it's the rare iPod accessory that's just too rich for our blood, with several issues - a less than perfectly clean audio signal, remote distance limitations, and too few cables in the box - that should have been fixed for the price. Buy if you have cash to burn.



PRICE: \$150 Rating: B
[WWW.DLO.COM](http://www.dlo.com)



We didn't feel that any iPod Dock - video or otherwise - deserved to win our Best Dock of the Year award for 2006. The reasons are explained on the following page.



Keyspan AV Dock for iPod

Though Keyspan's AV Dock was on the fine edge of our high and general recommendation levels, we liked its aggressive pricing and RF remote control, the latter capable of controlling a docked iPod from a distance of 50 feet away, with relatively sophisticated button features by RF remote standards. Affordable and capable of charging your iPod via an included wall adapter, syncing it with your computer, or outputting its audio to a stereo, AV Dock's biggest omission is a video cable; it supports S-Video out, but you'll need to spring for the \$5 cable yourself. Other docks also include cables to provide RCA-style composite video output, an omission here.

PRICE: \$80 Rating: A-
[WWW.KEYSPAN.COM](http://www.keyspan.com)

Why No Video Dock Award Winner?

Prices and features. No one's come up with the golden combination of a great remote and cool-looking dock with on-TV iPod menuing at a reasonable price.

Audio and video quality. If you're expecting perfectly clean output from these docks, you may be disappointed - they're good for TVs, but not hi-fi AVs.

Remote inconsistency. Good RF (radio-based) remotes walk all over Infrared remotes in real-life quality of experience, and users want more iPod feature access.

Apple iPod AV Connection Kit

The closest iPod dock to audio- or videophile in quality is surprisingly the least sophisticated: Apple's Universal Dock (\$39) provides clean audio and video signals, and also offers volume matching - the dock can reduce audio to the same level indicated on the iPod's screen. To really use the bare Dock, however, you'll need an AV Cable (\$19), Power Adapter (\$29), iPod-to-USB Cable (\$19), and probably an Apple Remote (\$29). Separately, they cost \$135, so Apple sells them bundled for \$99. A deal, right? Not really. The Remote works from 10-30 feet depending on lighting conditions, and gives you only iPod shuffle-style control of your iPod, steps backwards from all the other options here; despite the remote's Menu button, there's no on-TV or other iPod menu navigation. Good, not great.



PRICE: \$99 Rating: B +
[WWW.APPLE.COM](http://www.apple.com)



Kensington Entertainment Dock 500

Like its audio-only predecessor Stereo Dock, we really liked the Entertainment Dock 500 - it delivers a streamlined and convenient combination of an iPod dock, 50-foot RF remote control, wall charger, and AV cable in one package. And Kensington tried to offer a novel feature - remote navigation of the iPod's menus - and a different-than-Apple aesthetic approach. But 500 was a little off the mark in each regard: you really can't navigate iPod menus from any distance without large on-screen text, the dock's looks aren't super hot, and the price is still high. We're hoping for a sequel.

PRICE: \$100 Rating: B
[WWW.KENSINGTON.COM](http://www.kensington.com)

CONNECT CHEAPLY TO A TV IPOD VIDEO CABLES

2007 iPod Buyers' Guide

Need a one-piece, packable, and cheap way to see iPod photos or video on a TV? Cables.



Marware AV Cable for iPod Photo or Video

The key to any successful iPod-to-TV connection is actually a single component: an AV Cable. In short, Apple made the first one for the iPod, and Marware - well, Marware basically copied it. And made it twice as long. For the same price, which wasn't hard to do considering how much Apple charges for such simple items. As a result, the Marware AV Cable for iPod Photo or Video allows you to place your iPod (or an iPod Dock) as far as 13 feet away from your television's RCA-style composite audio and video ports. Even if you don't need that length, so long as you have the extra space for the cable, you'll probably want this. But you'll have to shop around to find it, as it's not carried in Apple Stores (for obvious reasons) and hard to find other than from online vendors. As with other AV cables, it doesn't handle iPod charging in any way.

PRICE: \$19 RATING: A-
WWW.MARWARE.COM

Though inexpensive, video cables provide only half of a complete iPod-to-TV solution - video runs down the iPod battery, which can be fixed with a dock or charger.

Pacific Rim Technologies Retractable AV Cable for iPod

If physical size is your primary consideration, and small is better than large, Pacific Rim's Retractable AV Cable for iPod is your best choice. Though it only stretches out to a 2.5-foot length - enough to connect to a nearby TV - the key is that it shrinks to a size only a bit larger than a few pens, perfect for packing away in a bag. A spring-loaded mechanism aids in fast retraction. We've tested a similar-looking version from another company, and found it dissatisfactory in quality; this one worked well.

PRICE: \$20 RATING: B+
WWW.PACRIMTECHNOLOGIES.COM



Apple iPod AV Cable

The original iPod AV Cable was packed in as a free accessory with every color-screened iPod photo - until Apple realized that its prices weren't yielding many early adopters. So Apple slashed the color iPods' prices and dumped as many of their pack-ins as possible, leaving the AV Cable as a too-expensive but very nicely made option for the few people who cared about viewing their iPod photo shows on a TV. With video-ready iPods now out there, the cable's more useful, but no cheaper.

PRICE: \$19 RATING: B
WWW.APPLE.COM



Video Cable Considerations

What are your video needs? Most cables output composite video to RCA ports found on most TVs. If you need S-Video, go with a Capdase cable or Apple Dock.

Is durability an issue? Retractable cables use much thinner and less shielded wire than the heavier-duty Belkin and Capdase options, and are more easily worn out.

Is fidelity critical? Consider an Apple Dock. If not, avoid "magical" cables made from supposedly special materials; shorter, well-shielded cables are better.

Belkin AV Cable for 4G/5G iPod (Color LCD)

The nicest looking of the AV Cables we've tested is this one from Belkin, complete with chrome-finished connectors, nickel-plated contacts, significant shielding and thick, rubberized cabling. At 12 feet in length, it's also one of the longest we've seen. But the connectors and cable are too big for some TVs, and some iPod cases too. If you can use this cable, it's worth the price.

PRICE: \$20 RATING: B+
WWW.BELKIN.COM



Capdase Come Home AV Cables for iPod

Gold-plated connectors for your iPod cables? That's one of the draws behind Capdase's Come Home series of AV cables, which are more easily ordered overseas than in the United States. With unscrewable connectors that you can splice as you desire into high-grade component systems, and certain cables that use Dock Connectors instead of headphone plugs, these are great for tinkers, less necessary for the average user.

PRICE: ~\$20 RATING: B+/B
WWW.CAPDASE.COM



Need a bigger video screen? PORTABLE VIDEO DISPLAYS

If you're tired of holding or straining to see videos on your 5G iPod, these will help - lots.



Sonic Impact Video-55

Whether you're sitting in an airplane, car, or bedroom, watching TV shows or movies on the 5G iPod's 2.5-inch screen isn't fun. Enter the mini laptop-like Video-55, which blends a quality 7-inch display and two legitimately good speakers with an iPod dock, 6-hour battery pack, and remote control. The reasons were simple: it looks and sounds better than its closest competitor, despite iFlip's larger-looking speakers and screen, includes a few extra frills, such as a car charger and fabric carrying bag, and has a few cool design touches. There's a touch-sensitive control surface next to the iPod, rubberized anti-scratch external surfaces, a pop-out compartment for the 10-button remote, and a rubber-covered side panel with USB, AV-in, and AV-out ports. For the asking price - more than a 30GB iPod, only \$50 less than an 80GB model - we'd understand if you went with the \$200 iFlip instead, but you'll miss out on a lot of great features.

PRICE: \$300 Rating: B+
WWW.SIS.COM



Did you know? After the iPod 5G's October 2005 release, developers began to discuss add-on iPod video displays in January, 2006; the first models appeared in July.

Memorex iFlip

As good as Video-55 may be, the cheaper iFlip is probably going to be the more popular design: for only \$200, you get a 8.4-inch screen in a Video-55-like mini laptop format, right above two speakers and an iPod dock. Twin headphone ports let two people listen quietly at once, and the battery pack is a bit better than Video-55s, running for nearly



PRICE: \$200 Rating: B+
MEMOREXELECTRONICS.COM

Add-On Screens: Good or Bad Buys?

For near-term use, they're smart. As of the November 1 date of this Guide, there's no other way to watch iPod videos on a portable 7- or 8-inch screen with a dock.

There are other options. With a \$19 iPod AV Cable, you can connect your iPod to some less expensive portable LCD screens. Wearable video displays cost even more.

What's next? Apple watchers expect bigger-screened iPods in 2007, but it's highly unlikely that they'll have 7- or 8-inch displays, let alone at these prices.



iLuv i1055 / Zeon Z1055

The first portable display released for the fifth-generation iPod is the weakest of the bunch overall, but still has a couple of interesting features. Sold under both the iLuv and Zeon names, i1055 is the only portable video add-on for the iPod to pack a built-in DVD player. And iLuv also includes tons of pack-ins - car and wall chargers, a carrying case, headphones, and Infrared remote control. But performance is steps below iFlip and Video-55; the rechargeable battery ran for only a little over 2 hours of DVD content or 3.5 hours of iPod content before expiring, the screen and speakers aren't up to even iFlip's level, and the iPod interface is weak: the iPod dock's on back, so you need to flip i1055 over to change videos or songs, and the remote doesn't handle any iPod controls. If you have a large DVD collection that you can't rip to the iPod, or need to give a box full of goodies to a less discerning iPod owner, consider this an option. Otherwise, you'll be much better off with either of the others.

PRICE: \$230 Rating: C
WWW.I-LUV.COM

FLASHING BEFORE YOUR EYES
WEARABLE DISPLAYS

2007 iPod Buyers' Guide

Big screen iPod video isn't limited to fold-open displays; these create virtual TVs.

MicroOptical myvu for iPod

Every iPod accessory category has a best-of-breed entry, and MicroOptical's myvu for iPod is the best wearable video display we've tested. Designed to let you watch iPod videos while you lay back in any chair, myvu consists of a pair of lightweight goggles with two 320x240 LCD screens in front of your eyes, earbuds dangling down for your ears, and a cable with an in-line remote control leading to your iPod. Shipping with detachable rubber nosepieces and silicone rubber ear tips of various sizes, myvu provides the best overall comfort we've yet experienced in a wearable display, fitting your nose noticeably better than the alternatives, and ears substantially so, sealing your canals against outside noise. Similarly, the dual screens provide a viewing experience that's similar to seeing a clear, medium-sized TV floating in front of your eyes - better-looking than both iWear and ezVision, and completely contrast- and brightness-adjustable, though smaller. While the price isn't as attractive as it needs to be to win over more mainstream buyers, MicroOptical's kit, which includes a nice 6-hour iPod battery pack/case to extend your play time, and a quality ballistic nylon, zippered travel pouch, feels like a complete and well-designed package.

PRICE: \$399 RATING: B+
WWW.MYVU.COM



Only three major companies are marketing wearable iPod displays today: a fourth company, eMagin, has placed its eyeBud on hold awaiting newer, better displays.



Icuiti iWear for iPod

When you compare Icuiti's iWear for iPod against the company's earlier, higher-end DV920 headset, it's actually impressive to see how far its engineering team has come. iWear is as simple as can be - it connects to your iPod without the need for an additional battery pack, uses the superior bottom Dock Connector port, and has literally no controls for the average user to be concerned with. You mold the flexible earpieces into shapes that fit your ears, move the retractable nose bridge so the twin 320x240 displays line up with your eyes, and press play on your iPod - it all works. Independent knobs for each LCD screen let users with corrective lenses see, too, and Icuiti touts the fact that their twin displays can be used for special 3-D videos, as well - the samples we've seen are legitimately impressive, and if quality content becomes available, the feature will be a big hit. But despite iWear's larger-than-myvu-looking virtual TV, it otherwise doesn't look quite as good, lacking contrast and brightness adjustments and seeming a bit more pixelated. Similarly, while lightweight, the headset wasn't as comfortable on our heads as myvu's, and didn't pack as many frills. It's still a solid, affordable pick.

PRICE: \$299 RATING: B
WWW.ICUITI.COM

Why Go Wearable?
Pros and Cons

Think QuietComfort for your eyes. If you're on a plane or just away from home, and don't have a big TV for iPod videos, you can sit back and enjoy, no squinting.

Resolution is only so-so. None of these systems beats the 5G iPod's native 320x240 resolution, which is OK to watch on a small screen, not great on a big one.

Style is sort of a problem. In the future, wearable displays will be lighter, smaller, and cheaper. Right now, you'll look like Geordi LaForge from Star Trek.



ezGear ezVision

Also sold as iTheater, ezGear's ezVision is the odd man out here, but still has advantages: it can be used with non-iPod devices and has an 8-hour battery pack. While its twin 320x240 displays are similar in specs to myvu's and iWear's, their viewing angles, contrast, and overall quality weren't quite up to either option's levels, and the video is interrupted whenever the headphone port-connected cord moves. Comfort is similarly so-so; two nose pieces try their best to make the unit work on different head sizes, but didn't work well for us. It's an okay solution at an okay price.

PRICE: \$400 RATING: C
WWW.EZGEAR4U.COM

tired of Solitaire? downloadable games

Full-sized iPods can now play 9 new games from the iTunes Store. Here are the best picks.



Electronic Arts Mahjong

Many genres of games may run into problems because of the iPod's unique Click Wheel controller, but the classic Chinese tile-matching game mahjong is a decided exception. As with other renditions of the same game, EA's Mahjong asks you to match pairs of tiles found at opposite sides of a large board - the challenge is that the tiles are a classical mix of Asian symbols that you'll need to memorize to perform the matches. You win only if every piece is removed from the board, which sometimes is rendered impossible by less than strategic matching. Unlike many of the iPod titles we've tried, Mahjong is beautifully illustrated and scored, with rich, Chinese-themed art and music and several game modes, including a pass'n'play option for up to four people and a linear game called Emperor's Challenge. Though some non-Asian tiles would have eased people in, virtually anyone will find Mahjong addictive as it's presented here.

PRICE: \$5 RATING: A-
WWW.EAMOBILE.COM

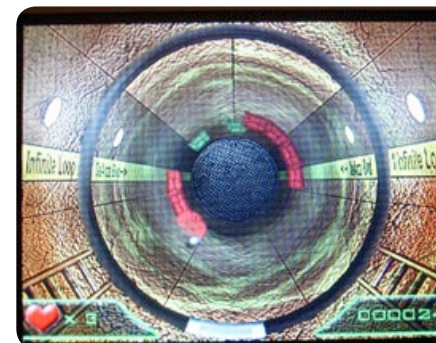
ILOUNGE
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B E S T
GAME

Did you know? Every iPod except the shuffle has at least one built-in game. Brick, Music Quiz, Parachute, and Solitaire are found on 3G, 4G, 5G, nano and mini iPods.

Apple Computer Vortex

If you couldn't get enough of the iPod's built-in Brick, or just love 3-D eye candy, Apple's Vortex is amongst the first games you should download for the iPod. In concept, it's yet another brick-busting Breakout clone, this time with a tube-shaped well, where both your bat and the bricks are rotating around the well's walls. Backgrounds and brick patterns change from level to level, music less frequently, and power ups make your bat bigger, stickier, or split it in three. What the art lacks in color, it makes up for in detail and effects, and while the game's a lot like Taito's old Arkanoid, it's cool today.

PRICE: \$5 RATING: B+
WWW.APPLE.COM



PRICE: \$5 RATING: B-
WWW.POPCAP.COM

Popcap Games Bejeweled

You might have heard of Bejeweled already, since many cell phones include a stage from the simple color-matching game as a demo, along with a pitch to buy the full game. Put simply, we wouldn't. Derived loosely from more richly textured gem matching games like Sega's Columns, you're presented with 64 gemstones and asked to match 3 or more in a row; more matches entitle you to move on to the next level. Though colorful, and aided by nice post-level 3-D transition effects, the gameplay is forgettable.

Why Are We Tough on iPod Games?

iLounge's editors are long-time game players. We're past the "hard core" stage at this point, but we know the difference between lame and worthwhile titles.

The iPod's controls aren't game-ready. For some reason, few iPod games let you change button schemes, and their default settings are sometimes really stupid.

We want to see better software. Games like Mahjong and Vortex have great art, effects, or both. Who wants to pay for ports of free web games?

Freshgames Cubis 2

While Bejeweled, Tetris, Zuma and Cubis 2 collectively represent the block-matching genre a little too well on the iPod, the most intriguing of the bunch is the least well-known. Cubis 2 lets you shoot blocks into a three-layer board, where any three or more matched blocks will disappear. Emptying the board is the key to success, aided by attractive, user-changeable graphics that make on-iPod viewing both easy and pleasant. Lots of levels, accessible quickly, make this a long-term keeper.

PRICE: \$5 RATING: B
WWW.FRESHGAMES.COM



Popcap Games Zuma

Known by myriad other names, Zuma wraps Bejeweled's block-matching theme around spirals. You sit at screen's center, firing colored balls at twisting lines of balls that are inching towards your cannon. Every time you make a color match with three or more balls, they disappear, and hopefully stop the progress of the lines in your direction. Eliminate all the balls and you move on. Though it's a hair better than Bejeweled overall, it's still simple, repetitive entertainment, good for short bursts, but lacking depth; only a decent value given the price.

PRICE: \$5 RATING: B-
WWW.POPCAP.COM



PLAY, THEN PAUSE, THEN PLAY IPOD-COMPATIBLE TOYS

2007 iPod Buyers' Guide

You've played music, and maybe videos. But have you really played with your iPod?

Tiger i-Cat & i-Dog

We've seen a handful of iPod-ready toys over the past few years, but the ones that best match Apple's style and philosophies are Tiger's i-Cat and i-Dog, simple little glossy plastic speakers in the shape of cats and dogs. Released first, i-Dog now comes in a wide array of colors, while the newer i-Cat is available only in black or white. Each one has transparent ears and chrome face accents, a tiny microphone to detect (and respond with purrs or yips) when it's being touched, and a tail you can pull to trigger more noises. Connected to an iPod via an included audio cable, they become passive listeners and speakers, playing your music and responding with an on-face light show that varies based on what they hear. Cute, inexpensive, and fun, they're right for animal lovers of all ages - just pick your species.

PRICE: \$30 Rating: B
WWW.HASBRO.COM/TIGER

ILOUNGE
2 0 0 6
BEST
IPOD TOY

Rare is the iPod-compatible toy with an actual iPod dock in the center. To keep prices down, most manufacturers use device-agnostic headphone plugs instead.

KNG America FUNKit

This picture almost speaks for itself - all that's missing is the explanation that FUNKit has speakers at the bottom, a true iPod dock in the center, and a moving body. Plug in your iPod, flip a couple of switches on the unit, and watch the FUNKit deejay pretend to scratch records as a bright LED light show goes off around the speakers. Your iPod shakes gently back and forth, and with one switch on, FUNKit will interrupt (not fade over) your music with pre-recorded phrases and even an extended song. Available in black or white, it's a pricey novelty.



PRICE: \$100 Rating: B-
WWW.FUNKITSTUFF.COM

Tips Before Toys: Think Kid-Safe

Consider safe listening levels. Loud music can quickly damage hearing. Use iPod's Volume Limit feature and keep speakers at a distance from young ears.

Avoid iPod and kid damage. Toys that connect to the iPod add distraction to an already engrossing experience. Secure the iPod in a safe place, and sit the user down.

Beware burst batteries. Disposable batteries leak acid when they've been sitting around too long. Occasionally check any toy with batteries for leakage.

Rain Design iWoofe

Cooler in person than in photos, iWoofe is a speaker system shaped like an alien dog, featuring a glowing blue light on its downfiring subwoofer belly. Chrome eyes, feet, and an FM radio antenna contrast with the white or black plastic body, and a clear iPod dock on top provides a sturdy connection to iPods, nanos, and/or shuffles, depending on the version of iWoofe you buy. Sound quality's decent for a unit of this size and price, as is radio reception, though the tuner is screenless and thus tricky. If you like the look, you'll be pleased by the sound.

PRICE: \$119 Rating: B
WWW.RAINDESIGNINC.COM

B2 miJam Guitar

There are lots of miJam toys on offer for iPod owners - drumsticks, a mixing table, and a microphone - but the Guitar is the only one we felt was worth its price. You plug in your iPod, then a pair of headphones or speaker, and then you'll hear a simple drum beat and guitar-like sounds on top of your music. Three knobs adjust the volume, guitar pitch, and drum tempo; chord keys at Guitar's top activate a specific chord, and you strum to play notes. A whammy bar lets you warp notes, and a style button toggles between "heavy metal," "rock," "blues" and "bass" guitar, each with different sounds. Four AAs provide power and colorful lights.

PRICE: \$30 Rating: B
WWW.B2STUFF.COM



Transfer photos on the go Camera Adapters

2007 iPod Buyers' Guide

Empty your digital camera's memory card onto the iPod, but beware of battery drain.

Apple iPod Camera Connector

There's only one real option these days if you want to transfer photos directly from a digital camera to your fifth-generation iPod: Apple's Connector has a USB port that lets you connect a wide variety of cameras for simple, two-click transfers, and even shows you thumbnail previews of the images as they're being imported. Transfer speeds are regrettably very slow, however - you'll need to leave around an hour per Gigabyte, which will use up batteries on both your iPod and camera.

Price: \$29 **Rating:** B+
www.apple.com



Our Advice

Back when we first rated these adapters, average users were happy with 2-3 Megapixel cameras and paying a lot for low-capacity memory cards. Today, extra cards are cheaper in some cases than these adapters, and consumer cameras range from 4-10 Megapixels, making transfers take even longer. So skip these options; buy more memory cards instead.

Belkin Media Reader and Digital Camera Link

Though Belkin's Digital Camera Link (B) is basically just a larger version of the iPod Camera Connector, with its own set of batteries and therefore additional battery drain, the Media Reader (B+) allows users of Compact Flash, SD, Memory Stick, SmartMedia and MMC cards to transfer files from their cards to the iPod without draining a camera battery. Four AAAs are needed, and Media Reader uses the same thumbnail style preview as the iPod Camera Connector.

Price: \$40 **Rating:** B+/B
www.belkin.com



The iPod Camera Connector only works on color 4G and 5G iPods, not nanos. Who might find these adapters useful? Casual photographers on limited budgets.



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They're small. They're cool. And they're pure JBL.



jbl radial™
Legendary JBL sound, no big thing.



JBL Spot™
True JBL sound for desktops.



JBL On Stage™ Micro
Macro performance,
AC or battery power.



JBL Reference 220
How JBL does earphones.



JBL Spyro™
Flower power for the
multimedia generation.



JBL On Stage™ II UD
The iPod dock that knows
how to party.



AN IPODPOURRI OF add-ONS Everything Else

If it didn't fit elsewhere in our Top 40, but still deserved some attention, it's right here.



Sima Hitch

Though Sima's Hitch isn't perfect, it does two interesting things that can't otherwise be done on the road: it transfers music between any two PC-formatted iPods, and does the same for any data that might be on them, as well. With a rechargeable battery powering a fairly simple on-screen interface and control scheme, you're able to pick artists, albums, or data files to pass between the iPods at somewhat less than USB 2.0 rates, and can even connect other devices such as digital cameras or memory card readers to achieve photo-to-iPod transfers. Unfortunately, you can't do a complete dump of one iPod's library to another in one click - artist-by-artist or album selections are required, taking much more time. Sima claims a new firmware update will speed it up and add features, while the newly announced price below will make it better than when we rated it.

PRICE: \$100 Rating: C+
[WWW.SIMAPRODUCTS.COM](http://www.simaproducts.com)



Every year, new iPod accessory genres are created, testing to see what consumers might find worthwhile. Some ideas stick and get better, others quietly fade away.



ViewSonic ViewDock Monitors

A 19- or 22-inch monitor. With an iPod dock, USB hub, microphone, and speakers built into the base. Okay, we're not going to tell you that ViewDocks are brilliant iPod add-ons - the dock is only for syncing and charging, doesn't allow straight-to-monitor playback, and benefits only mildly from the speakers - but as monitors go, they're well-priced, have great screens, and look nice enough on a desk to pass muster.

PRICE: \$330-450 Rating: B-
[WWW.VIEWSONIC.COM](http://www.viewsonic.com)

TV Harmony AutoPilot

Have a TiVo and a PC? Then you can have iPod-ready copies of your favorite TV shows, if you're willing to wait through an automatic conversion process. Unlike Desktop Plus 2.3 (iLounge rating: C), a \$25 program from TiVo, AutoPilot includes quality control settings and auto commercial removal features that make iPod videos look, convert, and run better. Speed remains an issue, but the price - free, but with a \$20 requested donation - makes a good first impression.

PRICE: \$20* Rating: B
[WWW.TVHARMONY.COM](http://www.tvharmony.com)

Why Are These Items Here?

Each represents a possibly exciting genre. iPod-to-iPod transfers, super iPod docking devices, and video recording devices have the potential to be popular.

No one's done better yet. Though we weren't blown away by any of these options, each one is as good as it gets at its task. Further work would really help.

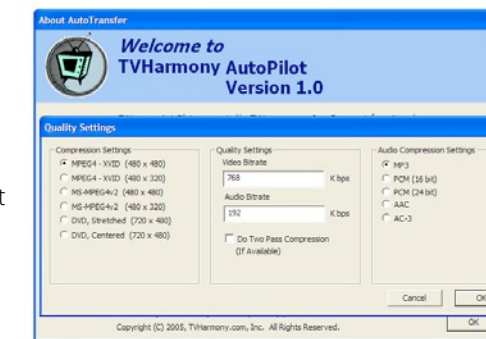
User expectations are key. Release an iPod monitor, people want to watch iPod videos; release a recorder or transfer device, people want it fast and easy.

Neuros MPEG-4 Recorder 2

If you don't want to pay \$2 per TV show purchased from the iTunes Store, you have a few choices: buy a TiVo and use iPod exporting software for your PC, find TV shows that are floating around the Internet under a shadow of questionable legality, or get a device like MPEG-4 Recorder 2, which creates iPod-viewable video files instantly from live TV broadcasts, without a time- and computer-consuming iTunes conversion. But the device's old VCR-like interface and remote are a show-stopper for all but gadget fans, and its ability to record only onto memory cards (CompactFlash or Memory Stick in the standard version, SD also in the Plus version) adds one more step to your iPod syncing process.



PRICE: \$140 Rating: C
[WWW.NEUROSAUDIO.COM](http://www.neurosaudio.com)



WHAT WERE THEY THINKING? CRAZY ACCESSORIES

2007 iPod Buyers' Guide

A handful of items that deserved to share the last pages of our Accessory Buyers' Guide.

AFT iCarta

There is little that can be said about iCarta that hasn't already been said: it's the iPod accessory that found its way into leading newspapers as an example of the skyrocketing iPod economy, and even appeared as an immediate laugh-grabbing slide at the It's Showtime event held by Apple in September. Atech Flash's design improbably combines an iPod dock with speakers and a toilet paper dispenser, a concept that only vaguely makes sense, and then assumes that you'd want to dock an iPod next to your toilet. According to the company, the idea is to "enhance your experience in any room," which is apparently achieved outside of a bathroom by folding the toilet paper holder speakers into a front-facing position. Regardless of where they're placed, they don't sound that great, and you'll have to switch the speakers on every time you, well, dock.

PRICE: \$100 RATING: B-
WWW.ATECHFLASH.COM

Did you know? The iCarta was originally named i-Lounge, but the name was changed to avoid confusion with a certain well-known iPod web site and community.



Saffire JukeBox Station

Nostalgic? Other than the fact that it is only 3 feet tall (to a standard jukebox's 5), doesn't sound great, and takes up a lot of space relative to its audio performance, JukeBox Station isn't really that crazy. The brightly lit front and wood cabinet look great, even if the cabinet's small fonts and artwork are eyesores.

PRICE: \$699 RATING: B-
PACRIMTECHNOLOGIES.COM

Tiger i-Fish

Tiger's i-Dog and i-Cat are amusing. And in all honesty, so is i-Fish, despite the fact that it's a nonsensical implementation of the same general idea. Like the others, i-Fish has a built-in speaker to perform music from a connected iPod, and an audio cable to do the connecting. But it also has wheels on the bottom and an motor that lets it move all over the place when in use, rotating around and flapping its tail all the while. It still puts on a nice light show, and makes especially soothing, nice musical sound effects, but the speaker sounds awful by comparison with its canine and feline cousins. It's more a toy than an iPod toy.

PRICE: \$40 RATING: B-
HASBRO.COM/TIGER/



iAttire iPod Costumes

Rarely will we use the words "utterly stupid" to describe any iPod accessory, but iAttire's many varied iPod Costumes are perhaps the craziest purchases we could imagine a person making - so ridiculous that we won't formally review them. The ghost costume shown here sells for \$40. So does the pirate costume for iPod shuffle. But the negligee for iPod mini sells for a mere \$24. For these prices, they should ship with the straitjacket costume you'll need if any of your friends, family, or neighbors discover what you're buying; thankfully, the company offers a choice between "iAttire packaging" or "brown paper packaging" so that no one will know your sad little secret.

PRICE: \$13-60 RATING: NR
WWW.IATTIRE.NET



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Best of the Year Awards

IPOD ACCESSORY
MAKER OF THE YEAR

2007 iPod Buyers' Guide

Over 300 companies now sell iPod add-ons;
our editors picked this year's top developer.

BELKIN

ILOUNGE

2006

BEST

ACCESSORY MAKER



Belkin Corporation

This was a rough year for iPod accessory makers: at the end of 2005, Apple dropped support for numerous top-mounting iPod add-ons, and forced developers to come up with bottom-mounting alternatives, a process that yielded a surprising number of turkeys. But rather than merely re-release its old products in slightly new shells, Belkin stepped up and created newer, better accessories - the impressive TuneFM and TuneBaseFM transmitters and chargers, the TuneTalk Stereo Recorder, the TuneDeck cassette adapter for iPod nano, and the SportCommand wireless sports remote control, to name a few. In most cases, its new releases have been best-of-class or close in design, features, or pricing; even partially realized accessories such as its TuneCommand AV remote control and docking station (shown) showed a commitment to thinking about what iPod users really want. Beyond the basics, we've also been extremely impressed by the company's follow-through: it goes out of its way to be forthright with customers regarding product performance and compatibility. Amidst an ever-growing crowd of competitors, Belkin has earned its place as our 2006 iPod Accessory Maker of the Year.

Founded in 1982, Belkin was best known for cables and underglamorous computer accessories before becoming an iPod and home AV electronics juggernaut.

Claro
for iPod with video

Clearly, we thought hard on this one.

iSkin Claro provides the best of both worlds: an ultra-clear scratch resistant outer shell wrapped around clarified shock absorbing silicone. Mix and match colors with optional Claro slim Packs.

iSkin
for
iPod nano (2G)

Beauty of nano proportions

iSkin has created a protector that follows not only the form but the finish of the iPod without additional bulk. Enjoy this dual-layer design that combines a front impact-resistant VISOR™ with a soft shock absorbing premium silicone inner layer.

SiLo
for iPod nano 1st Generation

Fashion Forward.

The SiLo sports a unique design that combines the sophistication of premium leather with the shock absorbing protection of high-grade silicone. Combined, they provide a high-fashion look with modern style and dual layer protection for the iPod nano.

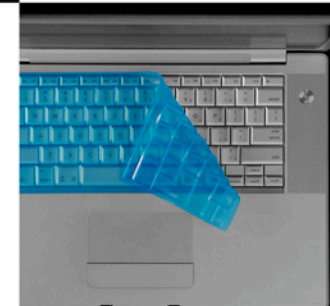
Vibes

for iPod with video and iPod nano 1st generation



tokidoki™ – Vibes you can see.

Looking for the coolest in cool? tokidoki is world renowned. It's available for both iPod with video and iPod nano.

ProTouch
Keyboard Protector

The key to cleanliness.

We all love our computers but keeping it free of dirt, food spills and other hazards is nearly impossible. With the ProTouch from iSkin, your keyboard will be protected from the elements while you type.

eVo³
Limited Special Edition
for iPod with video

The eVo Twin.

Combining the technology of the eVo3, the special edition goes one step further in providing added design features unparalleled to anything else.

DuoBand

for iPod nano 1st Generation



Freedom realized.

Available in two color combinations, Arctic Flex (clear with black band) and Blush Reflex (pink with pink band), the DuoBand looks as good as it works for the active iPod nano user.

Cerulean XLR



Listen Up...

"These remarkable high-definition, bass enhancing earphones are fashionable and sound amazing." Rated "Fabulous" AAUG.

iSkin
iSkin.comNeo
for PSP

Action Packed in Luxury

The iSkin neo for the Sony PSP® brings together the rich feel of genuine lamb skin leather with functional and protective features that combine to create an essential companion to your PSP®

The iLounge Report Card. We've reviewed over 1,100 accessories and iPods since Apple's 2001 launch, using simple ratings as a summary. Our Report Card gives you a quick sweep of what's out there - the full reviews on iLounge.com provide all the additional details you'll need to make educated buying decisions.

Adapters and Cables - Data

| | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|------|--|----|--|----|
| SendStation PocketDock Combo | A | Capdase Come Home Dock Conn/Comp. | B | Logitech FreePulse Wireless Headphones | B+ |
| SendStation PocketDock | A- | Capdase Come Home Dock Conn/S-Video | B | Macally BlueWave Headset | B+ |
| SendStation PocketDock Line Out USB | A- | BoxWave iPod Photo AV miniSync | C | Bluetake I-Phono BT420EX | B |
| Global Source Retractable USB/FW | B+ | | | Bluetake I-Phono mini BT450 | B |
| Griffin Technology Dock400 Cable | B+ | Batteries | | Oakley O ROKR Bluetooth Eyewear | B |
| Griffin Technology Dock800 Cable | B+ | BTI's The iPod Battery | A | Scosche Bluelife System | B |
| Kensington Accessory Adapter/shuffle | B | FastMac TruePower 1G/2G | A | TEN Technology naviPlay Headset Kit | B |
| Macally Link360 FireWire 1394A 3D | B+ | Newer Technology NuPower Super 1G/2G | A | Wi-Gear iMuffs Bluetooth Headset | B |
| Macally Link360 USB 3D Adapter | B+ | Apple iPod shuffle Battery Pack | A- | FriendTech iDea Wireless Dock/Headset | B- |
| Nyko Stereo Link Cable | B+ | BTI's The iPod Battery ii | A- | Logitech Wireless Headphones | B- |
| SendStation FireWire & Line Out | B+ | FastMac TruePower 3G | A- | GlobalSat iWAG Wireless Bluetooth Set | C+ |
| XtremeMac Audio Kit for iPod shuffle | B+ | Newer Technology NuPower Hi-Cap 3G | A- | d.Muse iBlue Bluetooth Phone Adapter | C- |
| BTI u-Link Accessory Adapter for nano | B | Sonnet Volta | A- | | |
| Macally Link360 FireWire 1394B 3D | B | Compact Power Systems Cellboost | B+ | Camera Adapters | |
| Targus 9-Pin/30-Pin Accessory Adapter | B/B- | ezGear PowerStick Shuffle | B+ | Apple iPod Camera Connector | B+ |
| Gadget Accessories USB Sync Cable | D | iLuv i603/604 Rechargeable Silicone Skin | B+ | Belkin Media Reader | B+ |
| | | Tekkeon myPower Battery Pack | B+ | Belkin Digital Camera Link | B |
| | | Belkin Backup Battery Pack | B | | |
| | | BTI AA iPod Battery | B | Car Mounts | |

Adapters and Cables - Indoor Power

| | | | | | |
|--|----|---------------------------------------|----|---|----|
| Griffin PowerDuo Charging Kit for iPod | A- | ezGear PowerStick iPod Battery Pack | B | ProClip Padded Adj. Holder w/ Tilt Swivel | A |
| Sonnet iPod USB Power Adapter | A- | FastMac TruePower 4G | B | TEN Technology FlexibleDock/Charger | A |
| Apple iPod USB Power Adapter (9/06) | B+ | Griffin TuneJuice BatteryPack | B | Nyko Universal Car Mount | A- |
| Better Energy Systems Solio | B+ | Lithium House iCel 201 External Power | B | Power Support Mobile Stand | A- |
| Capdase Universal Power Adapter | B+ | Nyko iBoost | B | ProClip In-Car Mount for iPod photo | A- |
| Capdase USB Power Adapter/shuffle | B+ | Nyko iBoost mini Battery Pack | B | ProClip Padded iPod In-Car Holder | A- |
| Logiix The iPower Pro Ultra Slim | B+ | Belkin TunePower | B- | Belkin TuneBase FM for iPod | B+ |
| Apple iPod USB Power Adapter (2005) | B | Compact Power Systems iRecharge | B- | Belkin TuneBase FM for iPod nano | B+ |
| | | Compact Power Systems iRecharge Value | C | Griffin TuneFlex nano Charger/Cradle | B+ |
| | | Gadget Accessories Battery Pack | F | Griffin TuneFlex 5G Charger/Cradle | B+ |

Audio/Video Cables

| | | | | | |
|---|----|--|-------|--|----|
| Marware AV Cable for iPod photo/5G | A- | | | Griffin PodPod/iSqueez | B+ |
| XtremeMac RoadShow Car AV Cable | A- | Bluetooth / Wireless Home Audio | | ProClip In-car holder for iPod | B+ |
| Belkin AV Cable for iPod (Color LCD) | B+ | TEN Technology naviPlay | A- | ProClip Padded Holder w/ Cable Attachmt. | B+ |
| Capdase Come Home Headphone Port | B+ | Belkin TuneStage for 4G/mini iPod | B+ | ProClip Padded Holder for iPod 5G | B+ |
| Pacific Rim Technologies Retractable AV | B+ | Griffin Technology BlueTrip LE | B+ | ProClip Padded Holder for iPod nano | B+ |
| Apple iPod AV Cable | B | Logitech Wireless Music System | B+/B- | Macally FMCup Transmitter/Charger | B |

As a fully independent resource of information on Apple Computer's iPods, iLounge has provided impartial reviews of iPods and accessories since the 2001 release of the first-generation iPod. Because of a strict separation between the business and editorial sides of iLounge, and our strong belief in the value of an objective resource for iPod owners, our reviews are in no way influenced by advertising revenues or outside concerns. We have no ties to any manufacturer of iPod accessories, and rate products solely on merit. Please address any questions regarding our reviews to jeremy@ilounge.com.

| | |
|---|----|
| Pro Fit Ultimount | B |
| XtremeMac MicroFlex Car/iPod nano | B |
| Belkin TuneDok | B- |
| ProClip Padded w/ Tilt Swivel& Charging | B- |
| HandStands iGrip Sticky Pad | C- |
| Pacific Rim Tech iCradle FM | D+ |

Car Power Chargers, Kits and Adapters

| | |
|---|----|
| Griffin PowerJolt USB Auto Charger (v2) | A- |
| Harman Kardon Drive + Play | A- |
| TEN Technology FlexDock | A- |
| Belkin Auto Kit | B+ |
| Belkin TuneBase FM Version 2 | B+ |
| BTI Auto/Air Adapter | B+ |
| Dension ICE-Link Auto Integration Kit | B+ |
| DLO TransPod FM (Boxy, Dock Conn.) V2 | B+ |
| iStore iPod2Car Line-Quality Integ. Kit | B+ |
| Monster iAirPlay Charger | B+ |
| SiK imp in-car charger/line out | B+ |

| | |
|---|-------|
| DLO AutoPod Intelligent Car Charger | B |
| DLO TransPod FM Late 2005 (Rounded) | B |
| DLO TransPod FM (Boxy, Dock Connector) | B |
| ezGear ezCharge for iPod shuffle | B |
| Griffin PowerJolt USB Auto Charger (v1) | B |
| Griffin PowerPod FireWire Charger | B |
| Incase Charger (Version 2) | B |
| Macally USB iPod Car Charger | B |
| Monster Ultra Low Profile Charger | B |
| Pacific Rim Technologies Car FW Adapter | B |
| Belkin TuneBase | B- |
| Belkin TuneBase for iPod shuffle | B- |
| Capdase USB Power DC Car Charger | B-/D- |
| DLO TransPod (for original iPods) | B- |
| DLO TransPod for iPod shuffle | B- |
| Marware Car Charger for iPod | B- |

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|---|------|
| Monster iCharger | B- |
| SendStation smartCharge shuffle/USB | B- |
| Belkin TuneBase FM | C+ |
| Dension ICE-Link 1.1 Auto Integration Kit | C+ |
| Digiana Audia X iTube-101 shuffle | C+ |
| Griffin RoadTrip All-in-One Car Solution | C+ |
| Pioneer AVIC-Z1/CD-IB100II iPod Adapter | C+ |
| Macally iPodCarCharger | D |
| Gadget Accessories 3-in-1 Travel Charger | B+/F |

Cases - iPod 5G (with video)

| | |
|---|----|
| Agent 18 VideoShield Kit | A- |
| Aquarius iJacket for iPod 5G | A- |
| Better Energy Systems Tread Visor | A- |
| Boomwave Podstar Diablo for iPod video | A- |
| Capdase Crystal Clear Case for iPod | A- |
| Contour Design Showcase video | A- |
| ifrogz wrapz Customizable Cases | A- |
| iSkin eVo3 for iPod 5G | A- |
| Marware Sidewinder for iPod video | A- |
| Marware Sportsuit Basic for iPod video | A- |
| Otter Products OtterBox for iPod video | A- |
| Pods Plus Aluminum V2 | A- |
| Power Support Illusion Case for iPod 5G | A- |
| Speck Products ToughSkin 5G | A- |
| Agent 18 VideoShield | B+ |
| Capdase Soft Jacket | B+ |
| Core Cases Aluminum Case 5G | B+ |
| DC Shoes Incase Folio for iPod 5G | B+ |
| Handstands iSnug Video Set | B+ |
| ifrogz Tadpole | B+ |
| Incase Neoprene Sleeve | B+ |
| iSkin Claro Silicone/Clear Case Combo | B+ |
| iSkin eVo3 Limited Special Edition | B+ |
| Marware CEO Classic | B+ |
| Marware Sportsuit Convertible for iPod 5G | B+ |
| Marware TrailVue for iPod with video | B+ |
| Pods Plus Aluminum Case for iPod Video | B+ |
| Power Support/Miyavix Kimono Case | B+ |
| Power Support Silicone Jacket for 5G iPod | B+ |
| Secure-It The PodSafe iPod Security Case | B+ |
| Speck Products Canvas Sport for iPod | B+ |
| Speck Products See-Thru Sexy Hard Cases | B+ |
| Vaja iVod video SP | B+ |
| XtremeMac Iconz Sport for 5G | B+ |
| XtremeMac MicroFlip for iPod with video | B+ |
| XtremeMac MicroGlove for iPod w/ video | B+ |
| Axio Deluxe Shock-Resistant Silicone | B |
| Belkin Flip Leather Case for iPod | B |

| | |
|---|----|
| DLO PodFolio | B |
| Griffin Disko 5G | B |
| Marware Sportsuit Sleeve for iPod video | B |
| Miniot iWood 5g/iWood Red | B |
| Orbino Cambio | B |
| Speck Products Active Sport Armband | B |
| Speck Products Active Sport Case | B |
| Tunewear PRIE Ambassador | B |
| Tunewear PRIE Ambassador Sienna | B |
| Tunewear PRIE TuneWallet | B |
| Tunewear PRIE TuneWallet Sienna | B |
| Speck Products Grass FunSkin | B |
| Vaja Classic AP186 for iPod video | B |
| Vakaadoo iVak 5G | B |
| Zofunk Zosen Silicone Case | B |
| Belkin Holster Case for iPod | B- |
| Belkin Kickstand Leather Case for iPod | B- |
| Case-Mate Leather Case | B- |
| DLO Action Jacket | B- |
| Innopocket Metal Deluxe Cases | B- |
| iPodstreet Flip Leather | B- |
| iPodstreet Leather Encased | B- |
| Pacific Design 5G/Video Flip Case | B- |
| Pods Plus Silicone Skin with Beltclip | B- |
| Pods Plus Silicone Skin without Beltclip | B- |
| Speck Products Cloud FunSkin | B- |
| Sumo Cases Horizontal PlayThru Stripe | B- |
| Vaja Classic AP181/191 for iPod video | B- |
| Vaja Classic AP187/197 for iPod video | B- |
| Vaja iVod video for 5G iPods | B- |
| Apple Computer Leather Case for iPod | C+ |
| Pacific Rim Mktg. iDitti Commuter | C+ |
| iPodstreet iPod Video iTube Silicone Case | C |
| iPodstreet iPod Leather Case w/ W. Strap | D+ |
| SKB Drypod Waterproof/Interactive Hard | F |

Cases - iPod 4G/color (Click Wheel)

| | |
|--|------|
| Incase Multifunction Sport Case for iPod | A |
| STM Cocoon case | A |
| Vaja i-Volution 4G with Wheel Protector | A |
| Otterbox Waterproof for iPod 4G/photo | A/A- |
| Belkin NE Sports Leather Case for iPod | A- |
| Contour Design Showcase | A- |
| Handstands iPak/iSnug Set | A- |
| iSkin eVo 2 with Wheel Cap | A- |
| Lajo eXoflp | A- |
| Marware CEO Classic 4G | A- |
| Marware SportSuit Convertible | A- |
| Marware TrailVue 4G | A- |

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|--|---------|
| Miyavix Kimono | A- |
| OtterBox oPod 4G/photo | A- |
| Speck Products ToughSkin | A- |
| Sumo Cases Flap | A- |
| Sumo Cases PlayThru Vertical 4G | A- |
| Vaja iVod DJ | A- |
| Speck Products GripSkin | A- |
| Speck Products PortfolioSkin | A-/B+/C |
| Acme Made The Wallet | B+ |
| Body Glove Fusion Case iPod 4G | B+ |
| Capdase Flip-Top Leather Case | B+ |
| Core Cases/InnoPocket Magnum Case | B+ |
| DLO Jam Jacket | B+ |
| ezGear Clear Case | B+ |
| H2O Audio SV-iP4G Underwater Housing | B+ |
| Incase Music Belt | B+ |
| Incase Neoprene Sleeve for iPod | B+ |
| Incase Wallet Fashion Case | B+ |
| iSkin eVo 2 | B+ |
| Lajo eXo 2 / eXo2fb | B+ |
| LifePod Urban Camouflage ModPods | B+ |
| Matias iPod Armor 4G | B+ |
| Moshi/Aeovie iPouch | B+ |
| Pacific Rim Technologies 4gShield | B+ |
| Power Support Silicone Jacket Set | B+ |
| Proporta Crystal Case | B+ |
| Secure-It The PodSafe iPod Security Case | B+ |
| Speck Products GripSkin 4G | B+ |
| Speck Products HandSkin | B+ |
| Speck Products iGuy | B+ |
| Sumo Cases Quilted and Stripe | B+ |
| Targus Flip Case for iPod | B+ |
| Targus Slide Case for iPod | B+ |
| Timbuk2 iPod Case | B+ |
| Tunewear Icewear 4G | B+ |
| Tunewear WaterWear 4G | B+ |
| Vaja iVod Crystal | B+ |
| Vaja iVod Rasta | B+ |
| Speck Products 4G SkinTight Armband | B+/B |
| Belkin NE Deluxe Leather Case for iPod | B |
| Belkin Neoprene Sport Case w/ Drawstring | B |
| Burning Love Pouch for iPod | B |
| Capdase Soft Jacket | B |
| DLO Relaxed Leather Cases | B |
| Gadget Accessories Solid Cover Case | B |
| HotRomz Cases for iPod | B |
| Incase Folio for U2 Special Edition | B |
| Incase Journal Fashion Case | B |
| Incase Travel Kit | B |

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|--|-------|
| Lajo eXo / eXofb / eXo iPodArt | B |
| Lajo eXo 3x | B |
| Noreve Tradition Leather Case | B |
| Piel Frama Luxurious Leather Case | B |
| RadTech Suleevz for iPod (4G/photo) | B |
| Rivet iGrab | B |
| Target/Aneta Genova Soundgear Sleeve | B |
| Timbuk2 iPod Carrying Case | B |
| Tunewear Prie Hook | B |
| Vakaadoo iVak 5G | B |
| XtremeMac Silicone Sleeve | B |
| Speck Products SkinTight 4G iPod Skin | B/B- |
| Apple iPod Socks | B- |
| Be-Ez Travel Bag | B- |
| Booq Venom45 Case | B- |
| Chums Flip Case for iPod | B- |
| Chums iFrame Case for iPod | B- |
| DLO Jam Jacket Pro | B- |
| Hook Casemandu iPod Travel Case | B- |
| Incase Leather Sleeves | B- |
| Incase Pouch Fashion Case | B- |
| MCA Hautes Coutures Double Stitch | B- |
| Pacific Design iPod Flip Case | B- |
| Paul Frank iPod Cases | B- |
| Power Support Crystal Jacket 4G | B- |
| Rivet iGrab with QR Belt Clip/Dash Mount | B- |
| Speck Products iKitty for 4G iPod | B- |
| Vaja Classic AP96 Leather Studded Case | B- |
| Agent 18 Click Shield | C+ |
| Aneta Genova SoundGear Play-Through | C+ |
| DLO Action Jacket 4G | C+ |
| Lajo eXo3 | C+ |
| Marware SportSuit Basic | C+ |
| Mindknob Premium Glove Leather Case | C+ |
| Pods Plus Leather Flipcase | C+ |
| Acme Made The Traveller | C |
| Lajo Zip4g b | C |
| Lime iPod Peel Cases | C |
| Lime Regular Peel Case for iPod | C |
| Mobile Juice Skin Art 4G | C |
| PRM iDiddy Case/Lanyard/Earbuds 4G | C |
| Target/Aneta Genova SoundGear Playthru | C |
| Belkin NE Leather Flip Case for iPod | C- |
| Belkin Sports Jacket for iPod 4G/20GB | C- |
| Pacific Design Pouch | C- |
| Krusell Music Multidapt for iPod | D+/D- |
| Gadget Accessories Aluminum Case | D |

Cases - iPod mini

| | | | |
|---|----|---------------------------------------|----|
| Lajo exoflpmi | A | Moshi/Aevoe Mini iPouch | B+ |
| OtterBox for iPod mini Waterproof Case | A | Speck Products iGuy for mini | B+ |
| Power Support Square Type Sil. Jacket | A | Speck Products Mini FlipStand | B+ |
| Vaja iVod mini | A | Speck Products PortfolioSkin for mini | B+ |
| Speck Products ToughSkin mini | A | Targus Slide Case for iPod mini | B+ |
| STM Mini Cocoon Travel Case | A | Tunewear WaterWear mini | B+ |
| Tunewear Prie Classic Face Case | A | Vaja Classic case | B+ |
| a.b. sutton Tokyo '64 Handmade Leather | A- | Belkin Hard Case for iPod mini | B |
| a.b. sutton Mini Clutch Leather | A- | Capdase Flip Top Leather Case | B |
| Capdase Metal Case for iPod mini | A- | ezGear Clear mini Case | B |
| Contour Design iSee-mini | A- | Global Source Deluxe Leather Case | B |
| DLO Jam Jacket & Pro mini | A- | HotRomz Cases for iPod mini | B |
| Handstands iPak/iSnug Set | A- | iLeath Mini Print Case | B |
| Incase Multifunction Sport Case | A- | Incase Handcrafted Leather Sleeve | B |
| Incase Neoprene Sleeve for iPod mini | A- | Innopocket Magnesium Case | B |
| iSkin mini | A- | Kroo Executive Leather Cases | B |
| Kate Spade mini iPod Cases | A- | Kroo Laguna Leather Cases | B |
| Lajo exo3mini | A- | Kroo Soho Leather Cases | B |
| Marware SportSuit Convertible | A- | Lime Mini Flip Case | B |
| Marware TrailVue | A- | Marware Safari | B |
| Matias iPod Armor mini | A- | Matias Clear iPod Armor mini | B |
| Miyavix Kimono | A- | Rivet iGrab mini with Lanyard or Clip | B |
| Pacific Design iPod Mini Flip Case | A- | Sena Detachable Flip | B |
| Power Support Crystal Jacket mini Set | A- | Slappa ShockShell | B- |
| Speck Products GripSkin for iPod mini | A- | Speck Mini iStyle | B |
| Speck Products Mini Arm Band | A- | Speck Mini Skin | B |
| a.b. sutton Mini Slip Handmade Leather | B+ | Targus Flip Case for iPod mini | B |
| a.b. sutton Mini Fastback Leather | B+ | Tunewear Icewear | B |
| Agent 18 Mini Shield Case | B+ | Burning Love Airpodz | B- |
| Agent 18 Mini Shock Case | B+ | Capdase Soft Jacket | B- |
| Belkin Leather Pouch for iPod mini | B+ | Chums iFrame Case for iPod mini | B- |
| Belkin NE Classic Leather Case for mini | B+ | DC Shoes / Incase Sleeve | B- |
| Body Glove Fusion Case mini | B+ | Gadget Accessories Aluminum Case | B- |
| Booq Venom mini Case | B+ | Marware MetroVue mini | B- |
| Eroch Lili mini Waterproof Case | B+ | Speck Products iKitty for mini | B- |
| H2O Audio SV-iMini Underwater Case | B+ | Timbuk2 iPod Mini Carrying Case | B- |
| Innopocket Metal Deluxe Case | B+ | Aneta Genova SoundGear Play-Through | C+ |
| iSkin Vibes for iPod mini | B+ | Belkin Sports Jacket for iPod mini | C+ |
| Lajo exo2mini | B+ | DLO Action Jacket mini case | C+ |
| Lajo exo2mini-fb | B+ | Krusell Music Multidapt for iPod mini | C+ |
| LifePod Urban Camouflage ModPod minis | B+ | Lajo exomini | C+ |
| Marware Santa | B+ | Marware Basic | C+ |
| MCA Hautes Coutures Snow for iPod mini | B+ | Marware Runabout | C+ |
| | | Modus Design Dopi Cases | C+ |

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| RadTech Sleevez for iPod mini | C+ |
| Target/Aneta Genova Soundgear Playthru | C+ |
| Bird-Electron POCO | C |
| PRM iDiddy Case/Lanyard/Earbuds mini | C |
| Burning Love AirPodz for iPod mini | C- |
| Proporta Crystal mini Case | C-/D- |
| Mobifly iPod mini Mobifly Kit | D+ |
| Tunewear Prie Hook mini | D- |

Cases - iPod nano

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|--|----|
| AVA Lava for iPod nano | A |
| iSkin Duo for iPod nano | A |
| Aquarius iJacket for iPod nano | A- |
| Better Energy Systems Tread Visor | A- |
| Boomwave Podstar Diablo for iPod nano | A- |
| Capdase Crystal Clear Case for iPod nano | A- |
| Capdase Soft Armor for iPod nano | A- |
| Carrie Scott/Herchmer Jamband Sport | A- |
| DLO nano fling Fashion Wristlet Case | A- |
| Griffin Technology Bookcase nano | A- |
| H2O Audio Waterproof Housing for nano | A- |
| ifrogz wrapz Customizable Cases for nano | A- |
| Incase Neoprene Sleeve for iPod nano | A- |
| Incase Neoprene Sports Cases for nano | A- |
| Marware Sidewinder for iPod nano | A- |
| Marware Sportsuit Basic for iPod nano | A- |
| Otter Products OtterBox for iPod nano | A- |
| Power Support Crystal Jacket for nano | A- |
| Power Support Illusion Case for iPod nano | A- |
| Speck Products Canvas Sport for nano 2G | A- |
| STM Holster for iPod nano | A- |
| Sumo Cases Stripe for iPod nano | A- |
| Tunewear Prie Ambassador Sienna | A- |
| XtremeMac SportWrap for iPod nano | A- |
| Agent 18 Shield 4 Nano | B+ |
| Apple Computer iPod nano Tubes | B+ |
| Axio Thump Shock-Resistant Silicone | B+ |
| Better Energy Systems Tread Ellipse III | B+ |
| Core Cases Aluminum Case for iPod nano | B+ |
| DC Shoes Incase Folio for iPod nano | B+ |
| DLO Action Jacket for iPod nano | B+ |
| Macally Icesuit Protective Sleeve for nano | B+ |
| Marware CEO Billfold Wallet for nano | B+ |
| Marware Sport Grip for iPod nano | B+ |

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|--|----|
| Marware Sportsuit Convertible for nano | B+ |
| Marware Sportsuit Santa for iPod nano | B+ |
| Marware Sportsuit Sleeve for iPod nano | B+ |
| Miniot iWood nano | B+ |
| Pacific Rim Tech. nano Magnesium Shield | B+ |
| Power Support Silicone Jacket for nano | B+ |
| Power Support/Miyavix Kimono for nano | B+ |
| Secure-It The PodSafe iPod Security Case | B+ |
| Speck Products Canvas Sport for nano | B+ |
| Tunewear Icewear for iPod nano | B+ |
| Tunewear Prie Ambassador for iPod nano | B+ |
| Tunewear Prie TuneWallet Sienna | B+ |
| Vaja iVod nano | B+ |
| XtremeMac IceFrame for iPod nano | B+ |
| XtremeMac Iconz for iPod nano | B+ |
| XtremeMac Iconz Sport for iPod nano | B+ |
| A-1 Quality Products Nano iKeychain Case | B |
| Apple Computer iPod nano Armband | B |
| Axio Deluxe Shock-Resistant Silicone | B |
| Belkin Folio Cases for iPod nano | B |
| Contour Design iSee nano | B |
| Handstands iSnug Nano Set | B |
| Incase Leather Folio for iPod nano | B |
| Innopocket Metal Deluxe Case for nano | B |
| iPodstreet Bifold Leather Case for nano | B |
| Marware CEO Card Wallet for iPod nano | B |
| Marware Sport Grip Extreme | B |
| Marware Sportsuit Runabout for nano | B |
| Marware Sportsuit Safari for iPod nano | B |
| Moshi nanoPouch | B |
| Nike Sport Armband for iPod nano/shuffle | B |
| Noreve Tradition for nano G2 | B+ |
| Pacific Rim Tech. Gel Shield 3-Pack | B |
| Pods Plus iPod Nano Skin | B |
| Shinnorie EZgoing Leather Pouch nano | B |
| Speck Products Active Sport Armband | B |
| Speck Products Active Sport Case | B |
| Speck Products nano Grass FunSkin | B |
| Speck Product ToughSkin for iPod nano | B |
| Sumo Cases Flip for iPod nano | B |
| Tunewear Prie TuneTag Sienna | B |
| Tunewear Prie TuneWallet for iPod nano | B |
| Vaja Classic AP161 | B |
| Winzz iFace nano | B |

| | |
|--|----|
| XtremeMac MicroGlove for iPod nano | B |
| XtremeMac MicroShield Clear Case | B |
| XtremeMac TuffWrap 3-Pack for iPod nano | B |
| Belkin Flip for iPod nano | B- |
| Belkin Holster for iPod nano | B- |
| Capdase Luxury Metal Case for iPod nano | B- |
| Case-Mate Leather Case for iPod nano | B- |
| Incase University Collection Wallets | B- |
| Pacific Design Nano Flip Case | B- |
| Pods Plus Aluminum Case for iPod nano | B- |
| Speck Products nano Cloud FunSkin | B- |
| Speck Products nano iGuy | B- |
| Speck Products See-Thru Sexy Hard Case | B- |
| SwitchEasy Capsule for iPod nano | B- |
| Tunewear Prie TuneTag for iPod nano | B- |
| Vaja Classic AP171 | B- |
| XtremeMac MicroWallet Accent | B- |
| XtremeMac MicroWallet Leather | B- |
| XtremeMac MicroWallet Pastel | B- |
| XtremeMac TuffWrap Single-Pack | B- |
| Apple Computer Leather Case for nano | C+ |
| Apple Computer iPod nano Armband 2G | C+ |
| C6 Mfg. Carbon Fiber Nano Case | C+ |
| Capdase Chic Leather Case for iPod nano | C+ |
| iPodstreet Horizontal Encased Leather | C+ |
| iPodstreet Jacket Leather Case | C+ |
| iPodstreet Jacket with Trim Leather Case | C+ |
| Noreve Tradition for iPod nano | C+ |
| Pacific Rim Mtg. iDitti Commuter for nano | C+ |
| Proporta Protective Silicone Case for nano | C+ |
| Belkin Carabineer for iPod nano | C |
| iPodstreet Metal Case for iPod nano | C |
| Mr. Smith Jimi nano-case | C |
| MP3 Band-It (1.0" Version) | C- |
| Pods Plus Leather Cases | C+ |
| Belkin Sports Jacket 3-Pack for iPod shuffle | C |
| PRM iDiddy Case/Lanyard/Earbuds shuffle | C |
| MP3 Band-It (1.0" Version) | C- |
| Pods Plus Silicone Skins for iPod shuffle | C- |
| Kroo Soho Leather Case for iPod shuffle | D+ |
| Speck SkinTight Armband for iPod shuffle | D- |

Cases - iPod shuffle

| | |
|---------------------------------------|----|
| Apple iPod shuffle Sport Case | A |
| iSkin Shuffle Duo for iPod shuffle | A |
| TuneWear Icewear Shuffle | A |
| Body Glove Fusion Case shuffle | A- |
| DLO Action Jacket for iPod shuffle | A- |
| iMojo shuffle Sweats | A- |
| OtterBox for iPod shuffle | A- |
| Power Support Silicone Jacket Shuffle | A- |
| XtremeMac TuffWrapz | A- |

| | |
|--|----|
| Agent 18 Shield 4 Shuffle Packs | B+ |
| Apple iPod shuffle Armband | B+ |
| Capdase Luxury Metal Case | B+ |
| Capdase Soft Jacket Value Set | B+ |
| Core Cases Aluminum Case | B+ |
| Exopod Aluminum Magnetic Case | B+ |
| Griffin SiliSkins | B+ |
| Griffin iVault | B+ |
| iSkin Vibes for iPod shuffle | B+ |
| Macally IceSuit shuffle | B+ |
| Pacific Rim Technologies Gel Shield | B+ |
| Pods Plus Crystal Case for iPod shuffle | B+ |
| Speck Connect & Protect for iPod shuffle | B+ |
| Speck Metal iPod Protection | B+ |
| Vaja AP11 for iPod shuffle | B+ |
| A.B. Sutton Kidskin Case for iPod shuffle | B |
| HotRomz Cases for iPod shuffle | B |
| Incase Pouch - Multipurpose Version | B |
| MCA Hautes Coutures Snow Case | B |
| Miyavix/Power Support Kimono Case | B |
| MP3Band-It Armband (1.5" Version) | B |
| PodGear JumpSuit Shuffle | B |
| XtremeMac Shieldz 3-Pack | B |
| XtremeMac Shieldz Characters | B |
| XtremeMac Shieldz Sport | B |
| Belkin NE Classic Leather Case | B- |
| DLO Jam Jackets and Caps | B- |
| Incase Neoprene Wristband for iPod shuffle | B- |
| XtremeMac SportWrap for iPod shuffle | B- |
| Incase Pouch - Five-Pack Version | C+ |
| Pods Plus Leather Cases | C+ |
| Belkin Sports Jacket 3-Pack for iPod shuffle | C |
| PRM iDiddy Case/Lanyard/Earbuds shuffle | C |
| MP3 Band-It (1.0" Version) | C- |
| Pods Plus Silicone Skins for iPod shuffle | C- |
| Kroo Soho Leather Case for iPod shuffle | D+ |
| Speck SkinTight Armband for iPod shuffle | D- |

Cases - 3G iPod (with Dock Connector)

| | |
|---------------------------------------|----|
| Contour Design Showcase | A |
| Lajo eXoflp | A |
| Marware C.E.O. Classic 3G | A |
| STM Cocoon case | A |
| Vaja i-Vod 3G | A |
| iSkin eXo2 Case | A- |
| Self Design BodyMask | A- |
| Eroch Studios Lilipod Waterproof Case | B+ |
| Gravis G-Pod | B+ |
| iSkin eVo | B+ |
| Lajo eXo 2 Case | B+ |

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| Marware CEO Glove 3G | B+ |
| Matias iPod Armor | B+ |
| Otterbox oPod | B+ |
| Speck Products iSport | B+ |
| Teski Roadie Case | B+ |
| Aneta Genova SoundGear Sleeve | B+ |
| Incase Sleeve 3G Case | B |
| Lajo eXo and eXo Inferno Cases | B |
| Lajo eXo 3 | B |
| Monster iCase Travel Pack | B |
| Power Support Silicone Jacket Set | B |
| RadTech PodSleevez | B |
| Piel Frama Leather Case | B |
| Speck Products FlipStand 3G | B |
| Terforma iSleeve G2 | B |
| Teski Executive Leather Case | B |
| iLeath Leather Print Case | B- |
| Speck Products iPod Skin | B- |
| CaseClosed iPod Cases | C+ |
| MacAlly PodCase Armband | C+ |
| JAVOedge Design 1 | C |
| Tune Belt iPod Armband Carrier | C- |
| Monster iSportCase | D+ |
| Proporta Aluminum iPod Case | D- |

Cases - 1G & 2G iPods (no Dock Connector)

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----|
| Incase Pouch | A |
| Marware C.E.O Classic Case | A |
| Marware SportSuit Convertible | A |
| Vaja i-Vod | A |
| XtremeMac Deluxe (New & Improved) | A |
| iGlove Leather Case | A- |
| J.R. Hill & Co. iPod Sleeve Deluxe | A- |
| Krusell Classic Case | A- |
| Waterfield Designs Sooper Dooper | A- |
| XtremeMac Deluxe (Original) | A- |
| Contour Design iSee | B+ |
| Groove Jacket | B+ |
| Marware SportSuit Sleeve | B+ |
| Matias iPod Armor | B+ |
| Incase Designs Sleeve | B |
| OP/TECH USA MP3i Pouch | B |
| The Pouch MP3i Player Carrying Case | B |
| Vaja Classic Case | B |
| Belkin iPod Case | B- |
| NeoPod Neoprene Case | B- |
| Speck Products FlipStand | C+ |
| Xigma Leather Case | C+ |
| Krusell Handit Case | C |
| OWC Pod Protector | C |

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Willow Design BiFold Case | C |
|---------------------------|---|

Cases - iPod Hi-Fi

| | |
|--|----|
| Gecko Gear Hi-Fi Traveller Carrying Case | B |
| Griffin Technology Hi-Way | B- |

Cassette Tape Adapters

| | |
|--|----|
| Belkin TuneDeck for iPod nano | A- |
| Philips PH2050W MP3/CD Cassette Adapt. | A- |
| Griffin SmartDeck Intelligent Adapter 4G | B+ |
| Sony CPA-9C Car Connecting Pack | B+ |
| XtremeMac iPod Cassette Adapter V2 | B+ |
| Griffin SmartDeck Intelligent Adapter 5G | B |
| Monster iCarPlay Cassette Adapter | B |
| XtremeMac iPod Cassette Adapter | C |
| Belkin Mobile Cassette Adapter | C- |
| Coby CA-747 Dual Position Adapter | D |

CD Ripping Services

| | |
|-----------------|----|
| RipShark | A- |
| Moondog Digital | A- |
| MusicShifter | A- |
| Ready to Play | B+ |
| RipDigital | B |
| dmp3 Music | B- |
| MusicRip | C+ |

Cleaners & Polishes

| | |
|---|----|
| Radtech Ice Crème (Version 2) | A- |
| Applesauce Products Scratch Removal Kit | B |
| iCleaner | B |
| DLO Care Kit for iPod | C+ |
| Radtech Ice Crème (Version 1) | C+ |
| Reckitt Benckiser Brasso Metal Polish | C |

Clips and Cord Managers

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----|
| BlueLounge cableyoyo | A- |
| Audio Outfitters earPod Earbud Case | B |
| Sendstation earBuddy | B |
| Sumajin SmartWrap Cord Manager | B |
| Apple iPod mini Lanyard | B- |
| Lajo TwistClips | B- |
| Power Support Cord Gatherer | B- |
| Tunewear TuneClip | C |
| Hook Industries BudFrog | D+ |

Clips and Guards - iPod shuffle

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----|
| Griffin Technology TuneBuds Lanyard | A- |
| DLO Flip Clip for iPod shuffle | B+ |
| DVForge The Clips for iPod shuffle | B+ |

Review grades are provided only as a convenient summary of the comprehensive reviews we publish online. A category, name, and grade-sortable archive is available via our Reviews page (ilounge.com/index.php/reviews/review_grades/). We also spotlight new reviews on our main page several times each week, and with only limited exceptions, make an effort to review products by as many different accessory makers as possible.

| | | | | | |
|---|----|--|------|---|-------|
| Kensington Transporters | B+ | Belkin TuneCast II FM Transmitter | B+ | Macally mTune Cordless Stereo Headset | B |
| Bruddy ShuffleMate | B | C. Crane FM Transmitter | B+ | Macally Noise Reduction Headphones | B |
| Marware Sport Grip for iPod shuffle | B | Kensington Pico FM Transmitter for iPod | B | Mophie Song Sling Retractable Lanyard | B |
| XtremeMac Shieldz | B | XtremeMac AirPlay2 | B/C+ | Sennheiser LX70 | B |
| Devoted1 iBelieve Crucifix Cap | B- | BTI FM Transmitter for iPod nano | B- | Sennheiser PMX70 | B |
| Rivet Grab for iPod shuffle | B- | DLO nanoTune Transmitter/Radio/Amp | B- | Sennheiser PX200 | B |
| Tunewear Aluminum ClipWear shuffle | B- | Griffin iTrip with Dock Connector | B- | Shure E3c Earphones | B |
| XtremeMac SuperClip | B- | Tekkeon myPower FM Transmitter | B- | Apple iPod nano Lanyard Headphones | B- |
| XtremeMac SuperHook | B- | Sonnet Podfreq FM Transmitter | D+ | Apple iPod nano Lanyard Headphones 2G | B- |
| Griffin TuneCaps | C+ | | | Aural New York Earbuds | B- |
| JP's Clip + Armband for iPod Shuffle | C+ | Headphones & In-Canal Earphones | | Bose QuietComfort 3 Acoustic Noise-Can | B- |
| XtremeMac Bumperz | C+ | AKG k701 Reference Headphones | A | FriendTech iDea Wireless HiFi Headset | B- |
| RadTech ClearClip for shuffle | C | Etymotic Research ER-4P Earphones | A | Griffin EarThumps | B- |
| Pacific Rim Tech. iPod shuffle Acc. Kit | C- | Etymotic Research ER-4S Earphones | A | Griffin TuneBuds Earbuds/Lanyard nano | B- |
| ShuffleClip by ShuffleClip | D+ | Etymotic ER-6i Isolator Earphones | A | H2O Audio Waterproof Headphones | B- |
| | | Shure E500PTH Sound Isolating | A | Logitech Curve Headphones | B- |
| | | Sony MDR-EX81 Earphones | A | Griffin EarJams | C+ |
| | | Ultimate Ears UE5c Custom Earphones | A | Macally Retractable Headphones | C+ |
| | | Bose QuietComfort 2 Noise Canceling | A- | HeadRoom iPod Earphone System | C |
| | | Sennheiser MX500 | A- | Plane Quiet Noise Reducing Headset | C |
| | | Sennheiser OMX70 | A- | Altec Lansing iM302 Headphones | C- |
| | | Sennheiser PMX60 | A- | Pacific Rim Tech shuffle Accessory Kit | C- |
| | | Shure E5c Earphones | A- | JAVOedge retractable earbuds | D |
| | | Sony Fontopia MDR-EX70/71LP | A- | Yahba Opus Earphones | D- |
| | | Sony MDR-E888LP Fontopia Earphones | A- | | |
| | | Ultimate Ears super.fi 3 Studio Earphones | A- | Headphone Expanders | |
| | | Ultimate Ears super.fi 5 EB Earphones | A- | Griffin SmartShare Headphone Splitter | A- |
| | | Ultimate Ears super.fi 5 Pro Earphones | A- | Macally PodDuo Headphone Adapter | A- |
| | | Ultimate Ears triple.fi 10 Pro Earphones | A- | Monster iSplitter/MusicShare | A- |
| | | Ultimate Ears UE-10 Pro Earphones | A- | Monster iSplitter 200 | B+ |
| | | Westone UM1 | A- | XtremeMac Audio Splitter | B+ |
| | | Westone UM2 | B+ | XtremeMac Audio Splitter for shuffle (V2) | B+ |
| | | Altec Lansing iM616 | B+ | Simpl Acoustics A1 Audio Amplifier | C |
| | | Altec Lansing iM716 | B+ | Upbeat Audio Boosteroo Revolution | C- |
| | | Apple iPod Earphones (9/06) | B+ | XtremeMac Audio Splitter for shuffle (V1) | D- |
| | | Audio-Technica ATH-CM3 Earphones | B+ | | |
| | | Design Annex iBeat Illuminating Phones | B+ | iPods | |
| | | ezGear ezEars SX50 Earphones | B+ | Apple 2G iPod 20GB Mac | A |
| | | Future Sonics Ears Model EM3 Earphones | B+ | Apple 3G iPod 15GB | A |
| | | Headbanger Audio Ear Subs Earphones | B+ | Apple iPod U2 Special Edition (Color) | A |
| | | iSkin Cerulean XLR Earphones | B+ | Apple 4G iPod 20/60GB (Color) | A |
| | | Logitech Noise Canceling Headphones | B+ | Apple 2G iPod 10GB PC | A- |
| | | Philips SHE9501 | B+ | Apple iPod photo (30GB/60GB) | A- |
| | | Shure E2c Earphones | B+ | Apple iPod E5G with video (30GB/80GB) | A- |
| | | Shure E4c Sound Isolating Earphones | B+ | Apple iPod nano 2G (2GB/4GB/8GB) | A- |
| | | v-moda Bass Freq Earphones | B+ | Apple 4G iPod (20GB/40GB) | A-/B+ |
| | | XtremeMac FS1 High Definition | B+ | Apple iPod from HP (20GB/40GB) | A-/B+ |
| | | Altec Lansing inMotion iM202 Earphones | B | Apple iPod nano (1GB/2GB/4GB) | A-/B+ |
| | | Apple iPod In-Ear Headphones | B | Apple iPod 5G with Video (30GB/60GB) | A-/B+ |
| | | Apple iPod nano In-Ear Lanyard Headph. | B | Apple iPod shuffle (512MB/1GB) | A-/B |
| | | | | | |

| | |
|--|----|
| Apple iPod mini 1G (4GB) | B+ |
| Apple iPod mini 2G (4GB/6GB) | B+ |
| Apple iPod shuffle 2G (1GB) | B+ |
| Apple iPod U2 Special Edition (with video) | B+ |

iPod Games

| | |
|------------------------------|----|
| Electronic Arts Mahjong | A- |
| Apple Computer Vortex | B+ |
| FreshGames Cubis 2 | B |
| Apple Computer Texas Hold'em | B- |
| Electronic Arts Tetris | B- |
| PopCap Games Bejeweled | B- |
| PopCap Games Zuma | B- |
| Electronic Arts Mini Golf | C- |
| Namco Pac-Man | D+ |

iPod Hardware Expanders - General

| | |
|---|----|
| Apple Nike+iPod Sport Kit | A- |
| Griffin RadioSHARK | A- |
| Apple AirPort Express | B+ |
| B2 miJam Guitar | B |
| ETCHamac iPod Etching Service | B |
| Griffin iBeam | B |
| LUMi Ventures Flasher for iPod | B |
| ViewSonic ViewDock 22"Monitorw/Dock | B- |
| Intuitive Devices Blinkit iPod Safety Light | C+ |
| Sima Products Hitch USB Transfer Device | C+ |
| DVforge JamPod Audio Mixer | C |
| Neuros MPEG-2 Recorder 2 | C |

iPod-Specific Clothes

| | |
|---------------------------------------|----|
| iSoundCap Hat for iPod nano/shuffle | B |
| Kenpo MKT-0& Jacket for iPod | B |
| TuneBuckle The Original for iPod nano | B |
| TuneBuckle Full Moon for iPod nano | C+ |
| Koyono BlackCoat Work Jacket | C- |

iTunes Phones

| | |
|---------------------------------------|----|
| Motorola RAZR V3i iTunes Mobile Phone | B- |
| Motorola SLVR L7 iTunes Mobile Phone | B- |
| Motorola ROKR E1 iTunes Mobile Phone | C+ |

Karaoke Accessories

| | |
|------------------------------|----|
| Griffin iKaraoke | B |
| doPi Karaoke | B |
| CAVS IPS-11 G Karaoke System | B- |

Microphones & Microphone Adapters

| | |
|----------------------------------|----|
| Griffin iTalk | A- |
| Griffin iTalk (2) Voice Recorder | A- |

| | |
|--|----|
| XtremeMac MicroMemo High-Fidelity | A- |
| Belkin TuneTalk Stereo for iPod with video | B+ |
| Belkin TuneTalk Microphone | B |
| Belkin Voice Recorder | B |
| Griffin iTalkPro CD-Quality Stereo Mic | B |
| DLO VoiceNote Voice Recorder | B- |
| Griffin Lapel Mic Stereo Microphone | B- |
| Belkin Universal Microphone Adapter | C+ |

Portable Video Displays

| | |
|--|----|
| Memorex iFlip 8.4" Portable Video Player | B+ |
| Sonic Impact Video-55 Video/Speaker | B+ |
| iLuv i1055/Zeon Z1055 7-Inch Tablet | C |
| ATO iSee 360i Video Recorder/Player | C- |

Remote Controls

| | |
|---|----|
| ABT iJet Wireless RF Remote 3G/4G/mini | A- |
| Griffin AirClick Wireless RF 3G/4G/mini | A- |
| Targus RemoteTunes Wireless 3G/4G/mini | A- |
| ABT iJet Wireless Remote w/ Bottom Dock | B+ |
| Apple Remote 3G/4G/mini | B+ |
| Belkin SportCommand Fabric Remote | B+ |
| Engineered Audio RemoteRemote 2 RF | B+ |
| TEN Technology naviPro EX 3G/4G/mini | B+ |
| Apple Computer Apple Remote | B |
| Brando Workshop iPod 5G Remote Cable | B |
| Nyko iTop Button Relocator 3G/4G | B |
| Scosche 150'Wireless RF Sport Remote | B |
| TEN Technology naviPod 3G/4G/mini | B |
| Griffin AirClick Remote for Dock Connect. | B |
| iPDA Remote Control for iPod nano | B- |
| Logic3 In-Line Remote with LCD Display | B- |
| Monster iEZClick Wireless On-the-Go | B- |
| DLO iDirect Wireless Remote 3G/4G/mini | C |
| Logiix The Remote+ for iPods | C- |

Security Devices

| | |
|--------------------------------------|----|
| Secure-It The PodSafe | B+ |
| Targus Mobile Security Lock | C+ |
| i2 Electronics iLOCKr neo Anti-Theft | C |

Software

| | |
|---|----|
| Ratajik StationRipper (PC) | A |
| Griffin iFill (PC/Mac) | A- |
| Talking Panda iBar (PC/Mac) | A- |
| Migo Personal for iPod (PC) | B+ |
| Talking Panda iLingo Translation Software | B+ |
| Elgato Systems EyeTV 2 Recorder (Mac) | B |
| TV Harmony AutoPilot | B |
| TiVo Desktop Plus 2.3 (PC) | C |

Speakers

| | |
|--|----|
| Altec Lansing FX6021 2.1 Speakers | A |
| JBL Creature II 2.1 System | A |
| Logic3 i-Station7 with Remote | A |
| Logitech AudioStation High-Performance | A |
| Pacific Rim Cube Travel Speakers | A |
| Altec Lansing inMotion iM7 | A- |
| Altec Lansing iMmini | A- |
| Athena Technologies iVoice | A- |
| Ego Music Showcase Water-Resistant | A- |
| Gear4 PocketParty for iPod nano | A- |
| Harman Soundsticks II 2.1 Speaker System | A- |
| iHome IH5 Docking Stereo Clock Radio | A- |
| iHome iH7 Dual Alarm Clock | A- |
| iHome i552 Portable AM/FM Radio/Dock V2 | A- |
| JBL Encounter 2.1 Speakers | A- |
| JBL On Tour | A- |
| Logic3 i-Station Shuffle | A- |
| Logitech mm50 Portable Speakers | A- |
| Macally PodWave | A- |
| Monitor Audio i-deck | A- |
| Nyko Speaker Dock 2 | A- |
| PodGear PocketParty | A- |
| Sonic Impact i-P22 Portable Speaker | A- |
| Altec Lansing iM3 | B+ |
| Altec Lansing iM3c | B+ |
| Altec Lansing iM9 | B+ |
| Altec Lansing iM11 | B+ |
| Altec Lansing M602 Digital iPod Speaker | B+ |
| Bose SoundDock | B+ |
| Elecom ASP-700i Speakers | B+ |
| Geneva Lab Model L Sound System | B+ |
| Geneva Lab Model XL Sound System | B+ |
| iHome iH26 iHome2Go Portable System | B+ |
| iHome iH31 iHome2Go Portable System | B+ |
| iHome iH52 Home System | B+ |
| iLuv i177 Clock Radio | B+ |
| JBL On Stage | B+ |
| JBL On Stage II | B+ |
| JBL On Time - Time Machine for iPod | B+ |
| JBL Radial High Performance Loudspeaker | B+ |
| JBL Spot | B+ |
| JLab Audio MiniBlaster Portable nano | B+ |
| JVC RA-P10 Portable Audio System/Clock | B+ |
| Kensington SX 3000R Speakers/FM Radio | B+ |
| Klipsch iFi Speaker System | B+ |
| Klipsch iGroove HG All-in-One | B+ |
| Logic3 i-Station Portable Speakers | B+ |
| Logic3 i-Station3 Speaker System | B+ |
| Macally IceTune | B+ |

| | |
|---|----|
| Sonic Impact i-Fusion Portable System | B+ |
| Sonic Impact T24 Digital Audio System | B+ |
| Tivoli iPAL | B+ |
| Tivoli iSongBook Portable iPod Music Sys. | B+ |
| Tivoli iYiYi | B+ |
| Altec Lansing inMotion | B |
| Altec Lansing iM500 for iPod nano | B |
| Apple Computer iPod Hi-Fi | B |
| Boynq iCube II | B |
| Cyber Acoustics iRhythms A302/A303 | B |
| Dynex Personal Speaker System/shuffle | B |
| Ignitek iCarrier | B |
| iLive IHMD816DT Home Docking System | B |
| iHome iH30 iHome2Go Portable System | B |
| iHome iH52 Under the Cabinet | B |
| Klipsch iGroove All-in-One | B |
| Logic3 i-Station 8 LCD Docking Station | B |
| Logitech mm22 Portable | B |
| Logitech mm32 Portable | B |
| Macally IP-N111/B Portable Speaker/nano | B |
| Memorex iWake Dual Alarm Clock | B |
| Monitor Audio i-deck plus | B |
| mStation Orb 2.1 Stereo | B |
| mStation Tower 2.1 Stereo | B |
| MTX Audio iThunder Portable Boom Box | B |
| PodGear Shuffle Station | B |
| Rain Design iWoofer | B |
| Tiger Toys/Hasbro i-Cat Interactive | B |
| Tiger Toys/Hasbro i-Dog Interactive | B |
| XtremeMac MicroBlast for iPod nano | B |
| AFT iCarta Stereo Dock/Bath Tissue Holder | B- |
| Altec Lansing iM5 | B- |
| Boynq iCube | B- |
| Griffin Technology TuneBox for shuffle | B- |
| Ignitek iCruiser Speaker System | B- |
| JVC NX-PS1 Compact Component System | B- |
| Kensington SX2000 Speakers | B- |
| KNG America FUNKit | B- |
| Memorex iMove Mi3005 Boombox w/ RC | B- |
| Mirage OmniVibe 360 Degree Omnipolar | B- |
| Monitor Audio i-deck compact | B- |
| Mythix iChant Portable Active Speaker | B- |
| Oregon Scientific iBall Wireless Speaker | B- |
| Saffire JukeBox Station | B- |
| Sharper Image iSphere | B- |
| Speck Products SpeckTone Retro | B- |
| Techwiz Innovations Musak Bag | B- |
| Tiger i-Fish | B- |
| Bosch Power Box Dock for iPod | C+ |
| Gear4 PocketParty V2 Micro Speaker | C+ |

| | |
|---|----|
| GINI Systems iTube Vacuum Tube 2.1 | C+ |
| Ignitek iCheer Speakers | C+ |
| Macally IP-S111 Portable Speakers/shuffle | C+ |
| PodGear PocketParty Shuffle | C+ |
| Sharper Image iPulse | C+ |
| Emerson iTone iE600BK Home Audio | C |
| iLive IBCD3816DT Portable Docking 2.1 | C |
| iLuv i188 BLK/WHT | C |
| Saffire iWoogie Blaster Hi-Fi Stereo System C | C |
| Monster iSpeaker Portable | C- |
| iLuv i7500 2.1-Channel Mini Audio System D | D |
| DLO iBoom (Version 2) | D- |
| DLO iBoom (Version 1) | F |

Stands (Docks & Cradles)

| | |
|--|----|
| Kensington Stereo Dock for iPod | A- |
| Keyspan AV Dock for iPod | A- |
| Pacific Rim Technologies Shuffle Cradle | A- |
| Power Support Metal Gear Stand | A- |
| Thought Out iPed 2 Adjustable Stand | A- |
| Apple Computer Universal Dock | B+ |
| Belkin Hi-Speed USB 2.0 4-Port Hub | B+ |
| Kensington Entertainment Dock 500 | B+ |
| Medicom iKub Stand for iPod | B+ |
| ModPod | B+ |
| Power Support Swivel Fix Stand | B+ |
| Sonance iPort In-Wall Docking System | B+ |
| SwitchEasy KuroDock & Power Adapter | B+ |
| Thought Out iPed Shuffle Dock | B+ |
| Apple Dock (for Dock Connector iPods) | B |
| Apple iPod AV Connection Kit | B |
| Apple iPod nano Dock | B |
| Apple iPod nano Dock 2G | B |
| Apple iPod shuffle Dock | B |
| Atech Flash iDuo | B |
| Bubble Design Habitat | B |
| DLO Flexible Dock for iPod shuffle | B |
| DLO HomeDock for iPod | B |
| DLO HomeDock Deluxe for iPod | B |
| Griffin Technology TuneCenter (no Wi-Fi) | B |
| Pacific Rim Technologies iCradle | B |
| PlasticSmith tux upright Stand for iPod | B |
| PodHolder | B |
| PodStand | B |
| Pressure Drop DecoDock for iPod shuffle | B |
| Speck Products Shuffle Dock | B |
| Westshore Craftworks iDockCover | B |
| Xitel HiFi-Link for iPod nano | B |
| Belkin TuneSync Dock and USB Hub | B- |
| DVBaseLtd DVBase | B- |

JP's/Pods Plus Charger/Hotsync shuffle
Pacific Rim Tech. nano iCradle
PlasticSmith tux tlt Stand for iPod
SwitchEasy PivotDock for iPod shuffle
Thought Out iPod
Xitel HiFi-Link for iPod
GINI Systems iConec iPod Dock
Power Support Metal Gear Simple Stand
BookEndz iPodDock
DLO USB Dock Cable for iPod shuffle
iPodCradle
JP's/Pods Plus Dock with Video Out

Stickers, Guards, and Film
Frontfield iPodDonut Wheel Protector
InvisibleShield Full for iPod 5G
InvisibleShield Full for iPod nano
InvisibleShield Full for iPod nano 2G
iSkin Wheel Cap
Power Support Crystal Film Screen Prot.
Power Support 3D Wheel Film
Tunewear Poptune for iPod shuffle
JAVOScreen
Power Support Crystal Film for iPod nano
Power Support Crystal Film for iPod 5G
Hewlett-Packard Printable Tattoos
MacSkinz Podskinz
Moshi iGlaze nano
Power Support Wheel Film
Shufflesome Stickers for iPod shuffle
Tatuz International Tatuz for iPod shuffle
Tunewear Poptune for iPod nano
Mobile Juice Shuffle Art
Moshi/Aevoe iGlaze video
RadTech Portectorz for Dock Connector
Tunewear Poptune Stickers for iPod mini
SkinEFX iPod Stickers
Capdase SkinGuard Stickers for shuffle

Wearable Video Displays
MicroOptical myVu for iPod
Icuiti iWear for iPod
ezGear ezVision Video i-Wear

Understanding Our Ratings: Here's how our letter grades aren't like the ones you received in school.

A A grades are awarded to only the very best products - ones that we **highly recommend**. We've awarded very few unqualified flat A grades since we started the site in 2001 - currently under 4% of all products, and ones that we think are superb across the board. An A- grade indicates one or two small deficiencies that limit a product's universal appeal. What about A+? Even the original iPod didn't receive an A+ grade from iLounge. We haven't awarded one yet, and may never do so.

B B+ and B grades are awarded to very good and good products - ones that we **recommend** to large but specific audiences. At the flat B level, we consider a product to be one that we would tell our friends are worth considering, with some modest caveats. A B- grade indicates a product that has a few medium to large issues that crimp its appeal, and qualifies for our **limited recommendation**. We recommend a B- product only to a niche of people who really need its functionality.

C C graded products are "okay" ones that **we neither recommend nor dislike**. They perform all of their stated functions acceptably, but may not be attractively designed, well thought out, or appropriately priced. A C+ grade indicates that the product was a little bit better than okay, but still not "good" or "recommendable."The C- grade indicates that the product was on the edge of being bad, and though it worked substantially as promised, possessed some serious design issues.

D D graded products are ones that we **actively disliked** for some reason.This doesn't happen often, and it has nothing to do with the manufacturer or vendor except for the choices made in designing and selling the product. Typically, the reason is that the product possessed such substantially below- average design, performance or pricing that it was nearly laughable by comparison to other available offerings.

D- Under iLounge's policy on defective and dangerous products, any product graded with a D- was **defective** in some substantial way when we tested it, or subsequently revealed to be defective based on substantial reader input or manufacturer admission. Since most of the products we review are from major manufacturers who test their products prior to shipments, relatively few products qualify for this rating. However, problem products continue to slip through the cracks, so be careful.

F F graded products were **potentially dangerous** when we tested them. Under our policy on defective and dangerous products, we only award a grade of F if a product contains a defect that could seriously damage itself, the attached iPod, or the purchaser. Examples of products that have received F grades include power chargers that do not properly regulate power going to the iPod's electronic components, and a stereo that could burst its batteries when connected to both battery and AC power. For obvious reasons, not many iPod accessories quality for F ratings.

A Warning to iLounge Readers: Astroturfing and Product Revving

Throughout 2006, iLounge's editors have been watching two trends that impact our reviews and ratings, and we have issued advisories on the web site regarding both. **Astroturfing** is a form of fake grass roots "viral marketing" whereby a company or its agents posts phony positive comments about its products ("This is the best ever! I love it!") or negative comments about its competitors ("This thing broke in 2 minutes, you should really buy ... instead!") on a web site such as ours in order to influence sales. **Product Revving** is a process by which companies continue to change features of products after initial shipments, leading sometimes to improved experiences, but also some consumer confusion. We do our best to remove astroturfing from our site, and ban companies that engage in it - if you've wondered why we don't cover certain products, that's often the answer - but we can't control revving. Thankfully, revved products are most often *better* than the ones we tested and rated.

Liberate Your iPod!

Windows and Mac

zeleksoftware.com/liberator.htm



Relax! The Music Liberator allows you to copy all of your music, videos, playlists, and ratings from your iPod to your computer - even music you ripped from CDs. With the Liberator, you can recover music, videos, playlists, and ratings from your iPod if your computer crashes, if you want to make a backup, or if you move to another authorized computer. If you have an iPod, you need the Music Liberator!



Listen To Your iTunes Music - Anywhere

accessTunes allows you to play your iTunes music through any web browser like Internet Explorer, Safari, and Firefox. You can even play your music through media players like iTunes and Windows Media Player on other computers. From the living room, office, hotel, Internet cafe, library, or any other location ... Access Your Music. Anytime. Anywhere.



www.zeleksoftware.com/accesstunes.htm

Windows and Mac

Grand Prize Winner
John Carr
Prize: 80GB iPod, Black

iPod Colors Winners

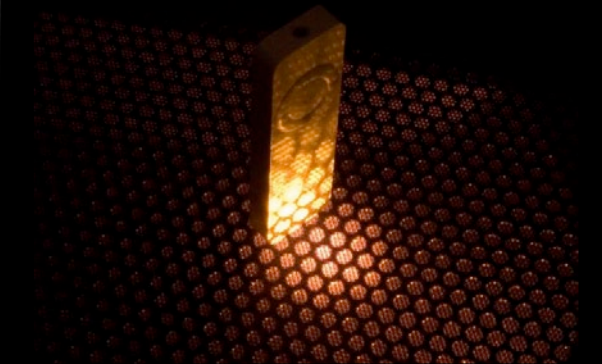
After a year of only black and white iPods, Apple brought color back to the family with the release of five different iPod nanos, then added a sixth color with the release of iPod nano PRODUCT (RED) Special Edition. Our latest photography contest celebrated the new iPod colors by posing a simple challenge: photograph any iPod against a background dominated by any one of the iPod family's colors: black, blue, green, pink, red, silver, or white. These entries were some of the very best we've ever seen.



Third Place (Random) Winner
Jonny Abraham
Prize: 4GB iPod nano,
Winner's Choice of Colors



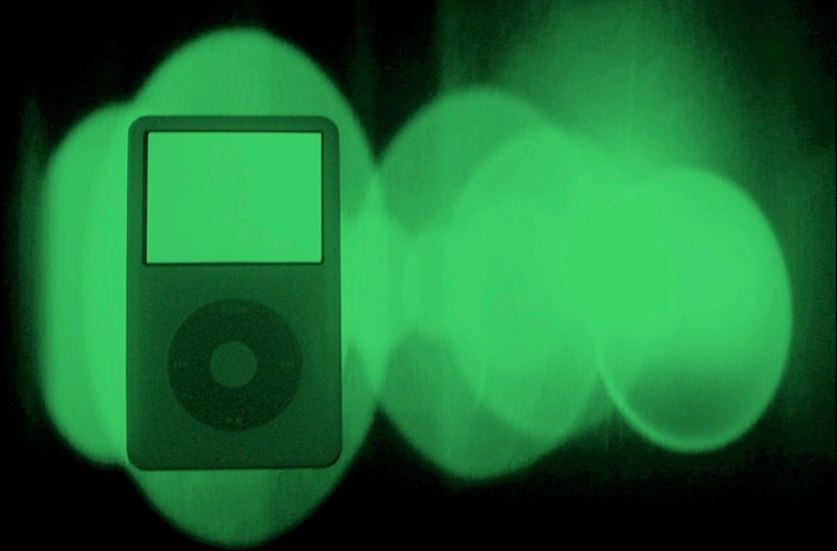
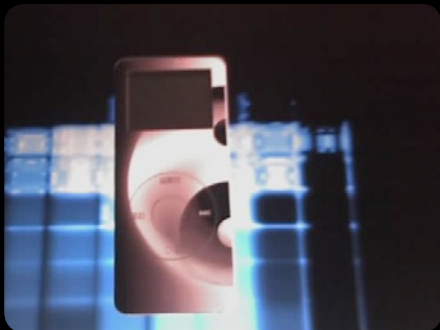
Second Place Winner
Graeme Smith
Prize: 8GB iPod nano, Black



Black



Blue

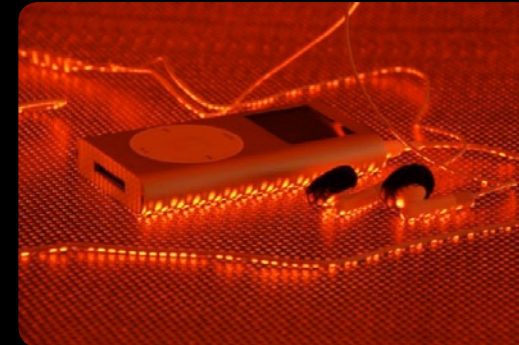
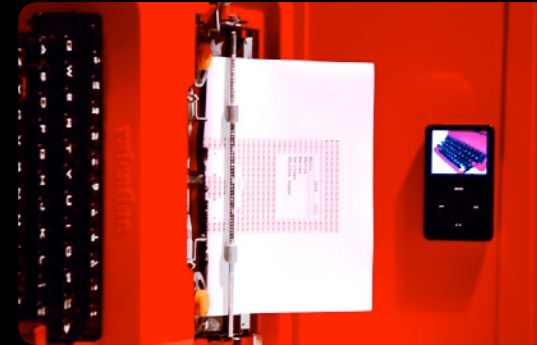


Green

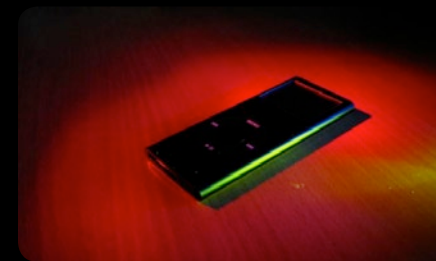
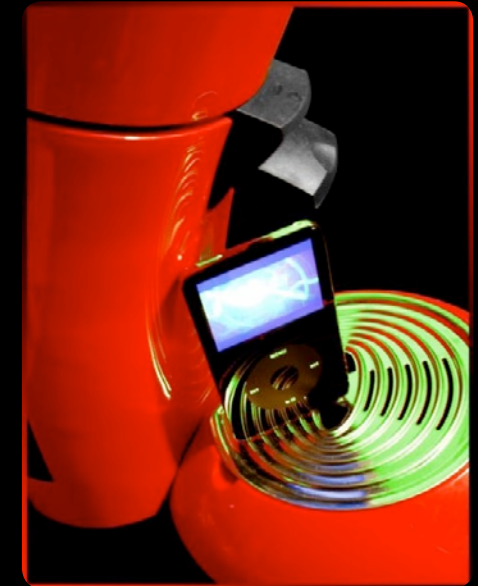


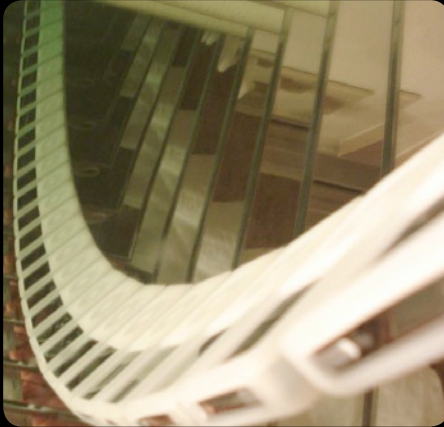
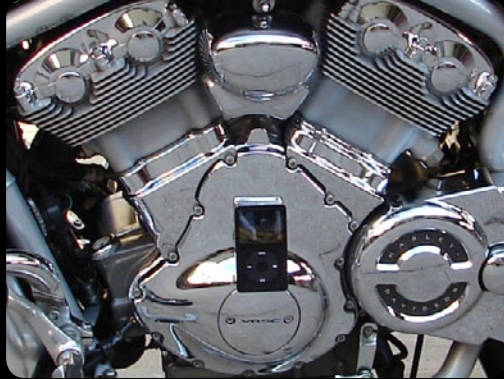


Pink



Red





Silver



White



Whether you're looking for the contact information for an iPod accessory maker or places that offer iPod-related services, start with The iPod Directory - all the key players are listed here, and easy to find.

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| Software Developers (PC) | 173 |
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Adapter/Cable Manufacturers

- Addlogix
http://www.addlogix.com
800-344-6921
sales@addlogix.com
- Belkin
http://www.belkin.com/
(800) 223-5546 ex 2263
techsupp@belkin.com
- Bluelounge
http://www.bluelounge.com/
(626) 564-2802
mail@bluelounge.com
- BoxWave
http://www.boxwave.com/
customerservice@boxwave.com

- BrightonNet Co.
http://www.brightonnet.co.jp/
81-3-5812-5735
export@brightonnet.co.jp
- Dr. Bott
http://www.dr bott.com
877-611-2688
support@drbott.com
- ezGear (Audio Outfitters)
http://www.ezgear4u.com
(800) 780-IPOD, 801 563-1600
info@ezGear4u.com
- FriendTech
(886)-2-87738986
sales1@friendtech.com
- Gadget Accessories, LLC, Inc.
http://www.gadgetaccessories.com/
(888) 368-5238
sales@gadgetaccessories.com
- Global Source
http://www.gblsrc.com/
info@gblsrc.com
- Griffin Technology
http://www.griffintech.com/
(615) 399-7000
support@griffintech.com
- iLuv/JWIN Electronics
http://www.i-luv.com
866-807-5946

- Intuitive Devices, Inc.
http://www.blinkitnow.com/
mail@intuitivedevices.com
- Kensington
http://www.kensington.com/
(650) 572-2700
- Logic3/SpectraVideo
http://www.logic3.com
support@logic3.com
- Logiix
http://www.logiix.net/
http://www.logiix.net/contact.htm
- Macally
http://www.macally.com/
(626) 338-8787
info@macally.com
- Monster Cable Products, Inc.
http://www.monstercable.com/
(415) 840-2000
- Newer Technology
http://www.newertech.com/
(800) 275-4576
sales@newertech.com
- Nyko
http://www.nyko.com/
(888) 444-NYKO
customersupport@nyko.com

- Pacific Rim Technologies
http://www.pacrimtechnologies.com/
(949) 481-2443
info@pacrimtechnologies.com
- PodGear
http://www.podgear.net/
+44 (0) 1494 522 721
info@disruptivegroup.com
- SendStation
http://www.sendstation.com/
+49 (69)-94413841
info@sendstation.com
- SiK
http://www.sik.com/
(650) 701-1745
info@sik.com
- Sima Products
http://www.simaproducts.com/
800-345-7462
http://www.simaproducts.com/contact_us.php
- Sonnet Tech
http://www.podfreq.com/
(949) 472-2772
support@sonnettech.com
- SwitchEasy, Ltd.
http://www.switcheasy.com/
- Tunewear
http://www.tunewear.com/
info@tunewear.com

The iPod Directory is the first comprehensive listing of major providers of iPod-related goods and services, located around the world. We have attempted to include as many companies as possible in the Directory, and do not require advertising or other editorial participation in order to add a qualified business name to this list. If you are the owner of a business and wish to submit or update information for this list, please visit ilounge.com/directory/.

- Upbeat Audio
http://www.upbeataudio.com
616-837-9500
services@upbeataudio.com
- Compact Power Systems, LLC
www.cpsyst.com
800-833-1070
customerservice@cpsyst.com
- Nyko
http://www.nyko.com/
(888) 444-NYKO
customersupport@nyko.com
- Xitel Pty, Ltd.
http://www.xitel.com/
(512) 331 5799
nasales@xitel.com
- ezGear (Audio Outfitters)
http://www.ezgear4u.com
(800) 780-IPOD, 801 563-1600
info@ezGear4u.com
- PDASmart
http://www.pdasmart.com/
(512) 258-4500
info@PDASmart.com
- XtremeMac
http://www.xtrememac.com/
866-392-9800
support@xtrememac.com
- FastMac
http://www.fastmac.com/
(408) 850-6232
support@fastmac.com
- TechRestore, Inc.
http://techrestore.com/
(866) 967-3786
help@techrestore.com
- Battery Manufacturers
- Battery Technology, Inc. (BTI)
http://www.batterytech.com/
(626) 336-6878
info@batterytech.com
- Tekkeon
http://www.tekkeon.com/
(888) 787-5888
Support@Tekkeon.com
- iLuv/JWIN Electronics
http://www.i-luv.com
866-807-5946
- Gadget Accessories, LLC, Inc.
http://www.gadgetaccessories.com/
(888) 368-5238
sales@gadgetaccessories.com
- Apple Computer, Inc.
http://www.apple.com/
(408) 996-1010
- iPodResQ
http://www.ipodresq.com/
(877) POD-REPA
info@ipodresq.com
- Maxell
http://www.maxell-usa.com/
(800) 533-2836
techsupp@maxell.com
- Bosity
http://www.bosity.com/
(905) 415-0800
customer_service@websecuremail.com
- Newer Technology
http://www.newertech.com/
(800) 275-4576
sales@newertech.com
- Belkin
http://www.belkin.com/
(800) 223-5546 ex 2263
techsupp@belkin.com
- BrightonNet Co.
http://www.brightonnet.co.jp/
81-3-5812-5735
export@brightonnet.co.jp
- iPodMods
http://www.ipodmods.com/
(888) 763-6637
sales@ipodmods.com
- Blitzsafe of America, Inc.
http://www.blitzsafe.com/
(201) 569-5000
blitzsafe@blitzsafe.com
- BMW of North America, LLC
http://www.bmwusa.com/
(800) 831-1117

iLounge reserves the right to exclude any business from this listing at any time if, in iLounge's sole judgment, such business has violated our Policy on Harmful Accessories, or engaged in other deceptive practices. However, omission from this list may be inadvertant or for other reasons, and should not be construed as a belief of improper dealings by any omitted company. The most recent iPod Directory is available on iLounge.com.

- iPodResQ
http://www.ipodresq.com/
(877) POD-REPA
info@ipodresq.com
- iPodRestore
http://ipod.techrestore.com/
(877) FOR-IPOD
help@techrestore.com
- Other World Computing
http://eshop.macsales.com/
(800) 275-4576
- TechRestore, Inc.
http://techrestore.com/
(866) 967-3786
help@techrestore.com
- UKiPodRepairs
http://www.ukipodrepairs.co.uk/
info@ukipodrepairs.co.uk
- Car Accessory Manufacturers
- Alpine Electronics of America, Inc
http://www.alpine-usa.com/
310.326.8000
- Audiovox
http://www.audiovox.com/
1-631-231-7750
Web Based Contact
- Belkin
http://www.belkin.com/
(800) 223-5546 ex 2263
techsupp@belkin.com

Clarion Corp. of America
<http://www.clarion.com/usa/>
800-GO-CLARION (462-5274)

Connects2
<http://www.connects2.com/>
+44 1384 291122
sales@connects2.com

Daihatsu Motor Co., Ltd.
<http://www.daihatsu.com/>
800-777-7070

Dension USA
<http://www.densionusa.com>
1-866-822-3673
info@densionusa.com

Digital Lifestyle Outfitters
<http://www.dlo.com/>
(800) 866-IPOD
info@dlo.com

Dr. Bott
<http://www.drdbott.com>
877-611-2688
support@drdbott.com

FriendTech
<http://www.friendtech.com>
(886)-2-87738986
sales1@friendtech.com

GBX Direct
<http://www.gbxdirect.com/>
(800) 571-2551

Global Source
<http://www.glblsrc.com/>
info@glblsrc.com

Griffin Technology
<http://www.griffintech.com/>
(615) 399-7000
support@griffintech.com

Hebe Styling
<http://www.hebestyling.com/>
+44 (0)1132 892 637
info@hebestyling.com

iLuv/JWIN Electronics
<http://www.i-luv.com>
866-807-5946

Kensington
<http://www.kensington.com/>
(650) 572-2700

Kenwood
<http://www.kenwoodusa.com>
310-639-9000
[http://kenweb1.kenwoodusa.com/](http://kenweb1.kenwoodusa.com/KenwoodPortal/KenwoodAudio/email/feedback.aspx?subject=generalquestions)
KenwoodPortal/KenwoodAudio/email/
[feedback.aspx?subject=generalquestions](http://kenweb1.kenwoodusa.com/KenwoodPortal/KenwoodAudio/email/feedback.aspx?subject=generalquestions)

Macally
<http://www.macally.com/>
(626) 338-8787
info@macally.com

Monster Cable Products, Inc.
<http://www.monstercable.com/>
(415) 840-2000

Neo Car Audio
<http://www.neocaraudio.com/>
(619) 819-0758
sales@neocaraudio.com

Newer Technology
<http://www.newertech.com/>
(800) 275-4576
sales@newertech.com

Nyko
<http://www.nyko.com/>
(888) 444-NYKO
customersupport@nyko.com

Pacific Accessory Corp.
<http://www.pac-audio.com/>
(714)835-3022

Pacific Rim Technologies
<http://www.pacrimtechnologies.com/>
(949) 481-2443
info@pacrimtechnologies.com

Peripheral Electronics
<http://periphuralelectronics.com/>
(727) 572-9255
Support@periphuralelectronics.com

Pioneer Electronics
<http://www.pioneerelectronics.com>
[http://www.pioneerelectronics.com/pna/](http://www.pioneerelectronics.com/pna/contact/us/0,,2076_4351,00.html?fpSiteId=2076)
contact/us/0,,2076_4351,00.html?fpSiteId=2076

Pioneer Electronics Inc
<http://www.pioneerelectronics.com>
Web Based Contact

PodGear
<http://www.podgear.net/>
+44 (0) 1494 522 721
info@disruptivegroup.com

Precision Interface Electronics (P.I.E.)
<http://www.pie.net/>
(800) 526-8590
info@pie.net

Pro-Fit International, Inc.
<http://www.pro-fit-intl.com/>
(800) 388-0073
sales@pro-fit-intl.com

Proclip
<http://www.proclipusa.com/>
(800) 296-3212
support@proclipusa.com

Scosche Industries
<http://www.scosche.com/>
(800) 363-4490
sales@scosche.com

Scosche Industries
<http://www.scosche.com>
800-363-4490
techsupport@scosche.com

SiK
<http://www.sik.com/>
(650) 701-1745
info@sik.com

Sima Products
<http://www.simaproducts.com/>
800-345-7462
http://www.simaproducts.com/contact_us.php

Sonnet Tech
<http://www.podfreq.com/>
(949) 472-2772
support@sonnettech.com

Tekkeon
<http://www.tekkeon.com/>
(888) 787-5888
Support@Tekkeon.com

TEN Technology
<http://www.tentechology.com/>
(800) 518-4TEN
info@tentechology.com

XtremeMac
<http://www.xtrememac.com/>
866-392-9800
support@xtrememac.com

Case & Clip Manufacturers

A-1 Quality Products (A1QP)
<http://www.a1qp.com>
866-476-3763
http://www.a1qp.com/shop/contact_us.php

A.B. Sutton
<http://www.absutton.com/>
help@absutton.com

Abitax Inc.
<http://www.abitax.co.jp/>
03-3407-2817 (81-3-3407-2817)
info@abitax.co.jp

Acme Made
<http://www.acmemade.com/>
(888) 486-3191
info@acmemade.com

Agent18
<http://www.agent18.com/>
questions@agent18.com

Allsop
<http://www.allsop.com>
800-426-4303
<http://www.allsop.com/customerservice.asp>

Aneta Genova, Inc.
<http://www.anetagenova.com/>
(212) 965-1089
info@anetagenova.com

Anya Hindmarch
<http://www.anyahindmarch.com>

Apple Computer, Inc.
<http://www.apple.com/>
(408) 996-1010

Arty
[http://wrappers.typepad.com/arty/](http://wrappers.typepad.com/arty/debbieabroad@aol.com)
debbieabroad@aol.com

AVA Showcase
<http://www.ava.com.sg/>
852 8120 3131
sales@avashowcase.com

Axio LLC (Harodesign)
<http://www.axio-usa.com>
760-557-0123

be.ez Bags
<http://www.be-ez.com>
sales@be-ez.com

Belkin
<http://www.belkin.com/>
(800) 223-5546 ex 2263
techsupp@belkin.com

Bird Electron
<http://www.bird-electron.co.jp>

Body Glove International
<http://www.bodyglove.com/>
(310) 374-3441
info@bodyglove.com

Boomwave Products
<http://www.thepodstar.com/>
info@thepodstar.com

Booq, LLC.
<http://www.booqbags.com/>
(626) 836-9365

BoxWave
<http://www.boxwave.com/>
customerservice@boxwave.com

Brando Workshop
<http://shop.brandocom.hk/>
brando@brandocom.hk

BrightonNet Co.
<http://www.brightonnet.co.jp/>
81-3-5812-5735
export@brightonnet.co.jp

Bruddy, LLC.
<http://www.bruddy.com/>
info@bruddy.com

Buddiez, Inc.
<http://www.podbuddies.com/>
admin@ibuddiez.com

Budfrog (Hook Industries, LLC.)
<http://budfrog.com/>
info@budfrog.com

Burberry
<http://www.burberry.com/>
(866) 589-0499

Burning Love
<http://www.burninglove.biz/>

Burton Snowboards
<http://www.burton.com/>
(800) 881-3138
info@burton.com

C. Ronson
<http://cronsonnyc.com/>
(212) 497-2121
jennifer@cronsonnyc.com

C6 Manufacturing
<http://www.c6mfg.com/>
support@c6mfg.com

Capdase
<http://www.capdase.com/>
(852) 2191 2173
info@capdase.com

Carrie Scott/Herchmer
<http://www.carriescott.com>
310-315-1716
sales@carriescott.com

Case Closed Bags, Inc.
<http://www.caseclosedbags.com/>
(866) 366-0913
april@caseclosedbags.com

Case-Mate
<http://www.case-mate.net/>
(866) 689-3432

Casemandu (Hook Industries, LLC.)
<http://casemandu.com/>
info@casemandu.com

Catherine's Pita Shop
<http://www.catherinespita.com/>
cat@catherinespita.com

Chanel
<http://www.chanel.com/>
(800) 550-0005

Chums, Inc.
<http://www.chums.com/>
(800) 222-CHUM

COACH
<http://www.coach.com/>
1-800-444-3611
Web Contact Page

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info@contourdesign.com

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866-228-7896
customerservice@corecases.com

Covertec
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[http://www.covertecstore.com/clients/](http://www.covertecstore.com/clients/identification.asp?from=contact)
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Since 2001, the world's leading resource for iPod news, reviews, forums, photos, guides, tricks, software, and much more.

Backstage at iLounge. Though we spend lots of time enjoying our iPods, our Editors' Blog (backstage.ilounge.com) is packed with tangents off our beaten path. Here are a couple of things we're looking at.



Oakley Thump Pro



The picture of **Thump Pro** doesn't do justice to just how much **Oakley** has miniaturized the latest iteration of its wearable digital music player: we've worn it and seen others wearing it, and for the first time, the company's vision for wearable performance sports gear is starting to come together. With substantially sleeker, thinner ear stems and a better nose bridge than earlier Oakley electronic sunglasses, Thump Pro is more comfortable than before, especially so in the flexible earbuds: they pivot into place on large and small heads alike. And rather than setting you apart from the crowd, these blend in as much as most performance sunglasses would. Best of all, Oakley's now offering these with tint-shifting Transitions lenses, allowing you to continue to use them indoors without having to flip the shades up in the front. A major improvement - expect it in November for between \$249 (256MB) to \$349 (1GB) in three colors - black, crystal black, and brown smoke.



Nintendo Wii



We weren't sure about **Nintendo's Wii** game console (\$250) when it was first feted as Revolution many months ago, but we're now pretty much convinced that this is the home console Apple would have released had it been in the games industry. Largely dependent on an unusual, motion-sensitive wireless remote control that has its motions tracked by an included sensor bar, Wii enables you to control some games entirely or partially via waves of your hand, which translate into sword swipes, steering wheel turns, or whatever else the game requires. Early games such as **Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess** and **Wii Sports** (shown) vary tremendously in graphics quality, but make bold attempts to show off the controller's new features. The really interesting feature is Nintendo's iTunes Store-like Virtual Console, which enables you to download classic NES, SNES, and Nintendo⁶⁴ games using a wireless connection for between \$5 and \$10, storing them on memory cards rather than on the unit's DVD-style discs.

iPod: Destination 2007. If you believe Steve Jobs - yes, he would know - “2007 is likely to be one of the most exciting new product years in Apple’s history.” Here’s what is most likely coming down the pike.

New iPod Hardware

Unless you’ve been in a cave, you’ve heard everything from speculation to mysterious teases from Apple allies about upcoming iPods: one iPod manufacturing partner claimed that a “none-touch” iPod was coming soon, possibly referring to a gesture-sensitive or voice-interpreting interface, Samsung mentioned “mid-range and high-end” flash iPods, though no high-end flash iPod exists, and financial analysts have buzzed about full-screen video and wireless iPods. We’re betting that a better video iPod is Apple’s key target, and many new technologies will emerge this year.

Phones

There have been rumors of upcoming iPod-like phones for years, and the details most recently “leaked” (a full touchscreen surface smartphone with a 3-Megapixel camera and interfaces that switch between phone, full video iPod, and text messaging/PDA-style features) make sense in all ways but one: the claimed \$499 price, which would kill the product’s appeal for almost everyone. But having an alternative - a cheaper, smaller, non-video version in a nano-esque form factor - makes sense. We think Apple will likely launch its phones soon, with Cingular as a partner, though we really wish the company would go carrier-agnostic.

Third-Party Accessories

We think that this will be the single weakest area for the iPod in 2007. Developers have been complaining that there is too much Apple oversight - and even a formal approval process - for all of their upcoming add-ons, and that the company has been discouraging particularly innovative ideas for no apparent reason. The result: these developers have been moving resources to competing platforms, such as Microsoft’s Zune, to potentially exploit some of the good ideas that Apple has shot down. Our strong belief is that 2006 has been a weak year for accessory innovation, and that ever-increasing prices will make things worse.

Apple Accessories

Our understanding is that Apple wants to expand and create add-on categories, not release me-too products - unless a higher-priced option (see iPod Hi-Fi) is plausible. iTV is one example. Expect more.

iTunes: What’s On the Horizon?

If you asked most iTunes users what they really wanted to see in upcoming versions of the software, we’d guess the answer would be “stability” - though patches to iTunes 7.0 have made the software less crash-prone than before, people don’t seem to be asking for new features as often as they ask for current ones to work properly. Some people are beginning to find the new features overwhelming, too. Our suspicion is that Apple will spend some time working to simplify and stabilize iTunes, perhaps creating a default beginner’s mode, and likely do behind-the-scenes work to make it stream content seamlessly to TV sets. Any way to get it back into iPod boxes?

What About Competitors?

For years, the iPod has steam rolled basically everything that’s tried to oppose it, and we suspect that SanDisk’s Sansa players and the initial iterations of Microsoft’s Zune will make very little headway against today’s iPod models. This will only get worse in early 2007, assuming Apple rolls out the new iPods we expect will appear, though these companies and others will be working on ever-smaller video players in both flash and hard disk formats. That said, we do think that the iPod will continue to have problems overseas for as long as Apple keeps prices high over there - the company should start aggressively discounting discontinued iPods to achieve U.S.-like dominance.



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